

MASSIVE ATTACK
The coolest band in Britain are back after four years away
THE EYE

DECONSTRUCTING WOODY ALLEN
Hollywood's most neurotic director talks about his new film
THE EYE

THE LAST DANCE:
Ballet stars search for life after the boards
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Manchester United manager's winning debut
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THE INDEPENDENT

Friday 17 April 1998 45p (50p) No 3,587

Brown defies warnings of recession

By Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

GORDON Brown insisted yesterday that short-term pressures would not divert him from his long-term economic strategy, despite the news that export orders and sales for UK firms have fallen to a seven-year low due to the strong pound.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, talking tough in Washington where he is attending an International Monetary Fund meeting, added for good measure that he would "lock in" strict spending plans.

A new survey published by the British Chambers of Commerce warned that manufacturing was a "hair's breadth" away from recession. Export sales fell to their lowest since the depths of the last recession in the first quarter of this year.

Mr Brown acknowledged that the strong pound was of concern to exporters, but he said: "What would be an even greater worry would be any risk of a return to the kind of stagflation we saw in the late 1980s and early 1990s."

The Government's policies had already delivered lower long-term interest rates, he said. "I believe the UK economy is in a position to establish, for the first time in decades, a virtuous circle of low inflation, high investment and a higher level of sustainable growth."

The Chancellor said the Government would also stay

tough on public expenditure, using the Comprehensive Spending Review as well as the recently-announced "code for fiscal stability".

"It is only if we manage to achieve spending discipline across the board, through the elimination of waste and a rigorous focus on our priorities, that we will be able to ensure investment in our key public services, particularly education and health," the Chancellor added. The spending review is due to be completed by the summer.

Critics of Mr Brown's tough line found new ammunition in the latest business survey from the chambers of commerce. It showed a decline in manufacturing, and suggested a modest slowdown in services. But service sector firms said they were hiring more people.

Peter Lilley, the shadow Chancellor, said: "Gordon Brown claimed he would end the cycle of boom and bust. But he is the first Chancellor to give us both at once - manufacturing in recession while services risk overheating."

The chambers turned their fire on the Bank of England, whose Monetary Policy Committee has held interest rates unchanged but with a split vote since January. Ian Peters, deputy director general, said: "The Bank of England must now display a united front and make clear that interest rates have peaked."

It would only take one more

rate rise to topple manufacturing into recession, he warned.

Minutes of the committee's March meeting, published on Wednesday, showed that for the second month running Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, had to use his casting vote to prevent an increase in borrowing costs.

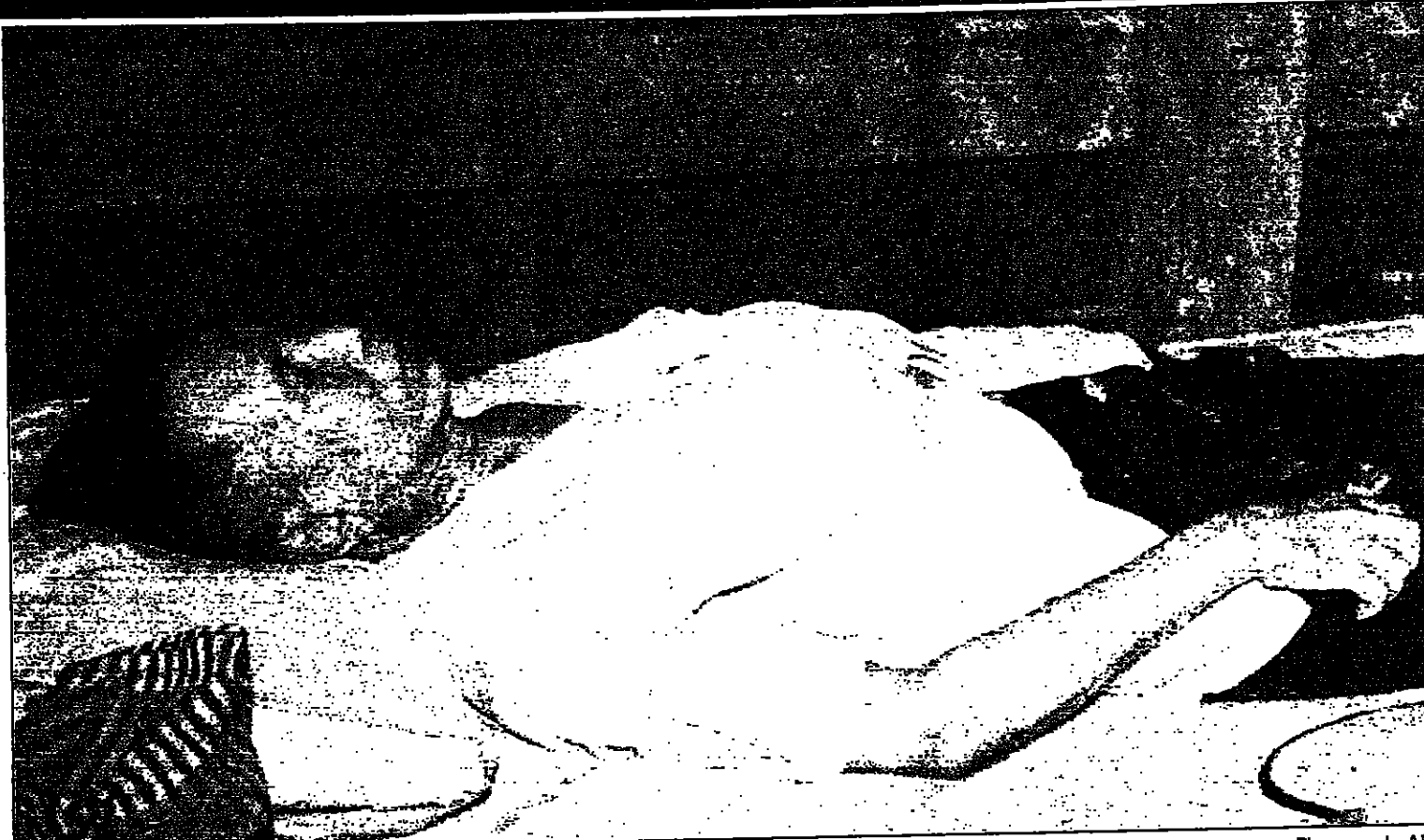
Yesterday's survey had something for both sides of the interest rate debate. All the indicators for manufacturing took a turn for the worse between late 1997 and the first quarter of this year, and confidence fell to the lowest level since the last recession.

Export deliveries and orders also weakened in services, but still-buoyant domestic demand raised planned employment and investment. Service businesses also continued to report a record level of difficulty in recruiting new staff, which will do nothing to allay concerns about pay pressures in the economy.

The Prime Minister's official spokesman said last night that Mr Brown would also be holding talks with the World Bank and the IMF, in the hope of underpinning the Northern Ireland peace settlement with increased investment. Mr Brown is expected to visit Ulster next month, to announce the details of a major economic package, which would provide added incentive for long-term domestic and overseas investment.

Exports under pressure, page 19

The most evil man in the world is dead



The body of Pol Pot in a Cambodian village two miles from the Thai border. He suffered a heart attack on Wednesday

Photograph: AFP

By Stephen Vines
in Hong Kong

POL POT, the Cambodian dictator whose name is synonymous with genocide, is dead. The man responsible for the killing, torture and starvation of over one million of his people, died peacefully following a heart attack.

There was confusion at first over whether reports of his death were true. But it now seems clear that he died late on Wednesday in a Cambodian village two miles from the border with Thailand. His body was shown to a group of journalists yesterday. They included the American reporter Nate Thayer, who has interviewed Pol Pot twice recently and is convinced that the dead man is the former dictator.

After causing havoc in his lifetime by plunging Cambodia into one of the most disastrous experiments in social

engineering the world has seen, his death at the age of 76 was prosaic.

Dressed in baggy grey trousers and an off-white, short-sleeved cotton shirt his body was laid out in a simple hut reeking of formaldehyde. Teenage Khmer Rouge soldiers, who resembled those who carried him to power for four bloody years, starting in 1975, guarded the body.

Before he died, they had been his captors. According to reports earlier in the week the rump of the Khmer Rouge had been planning to turn him over for international trial in a last attempt to save their own skins from advancing Cambodian government forces.

Pol Pot died deserted by his erstwhile comrades-in-arms in their last stronghold. Having inspired terror in Cambodia, he had become an entirely marginal figure. As if to emphasise the isolation facing the Khmer Rouge, the

only sound to be heard while Pol Pot lay at rest was the rumble of fighting between Khmer Rouge and government troops.

There is no suggestion of foul play in Pol Pot's death. Since he was arrested by his own troops last year he has been ill. The Cambodian government spokesman, Khieu Kanharith, said the state wanted to conduct a medical investigation but thought it unlikely that the former dictator had been killed.

Non Nou, the Khmer Rouge commander responsible for Pol Pot's security, said: "If they are afraid the body was tampered with, ask his wife. She was there."

It is unlikely that there will be much mourning for Pol Pot. Cambodia's King, Norodom Sihanouk, who twice allied himself with the Khmer Rouge, recently called him "one of the most horrible monsters ever created".

Known as "Brother Number One" during the years of his rule, Pol Pot may have been responsible for the deaths of one-fifth of Cambodia's population. Researchers believe as many as 1.7 million people died as a result of executions, torture and mass starvation.

Pol Pot received his higher education in France and acquired a reputation there as an amiable, fun-loving student. It was in France that he also became acquainted with Marxism and back in his homeland he built up the revolutionary movement which overthrew Lon Nol's regime in 1975.

The movement he helped to create is now largely decimated. It helped create the current government led by Hun Sen, a former Khmer Rouge commander who is also no stranger to using violence for political ends.

Rupert Cornwell, page 17
Obituary, page 18

British firms gave US politicians £3m

By Fran Abrams and
Chris Brown

BRITISH companies channelled almost £3m to the main American political parties in the run up to the country's last elections, it emerged last night.

United Kingdom companies gave more than any other foreign firms to American politics, a study has shown. Four of the 10 biggest foreign givers were British-owned.

The money has caused a row in the United States because donations by foreign companies are illegal there. These payments were legal because they came through American subsidiaries, but they have led to allegations of foreign influence.

Some were made voluntarily by employees through "political action committees", or PACs, set up by the firms.

Three quarters of the money - \$4.3m in 1995 and 1996 - went to the Republicans, though most firms also made donations to the Democrats.

Among the British-owned companies which put money into political campaigns were Brown and Williamson Tobacco, a subsidiary of British American Tobacco, which gave \$1.02m (£680,000) and Glaxo Wellcome, the pharmaceuticals firm, which gave \$921,454 (£614,000).

Others included two more pharmaceutical outfits, Zeneca, which gave \$25,247 (£216,000) and SmithKline Beecham, which gave \$264,950 (£176,000).

The issue was highlighted at yesterday's hearing of the inquiry into political funding,

which is headed by Lord Neill of Bladen.

Neal Moister of Labour Research, a group funded through trade unions to look at British political funding, said that some companies which had publicly

Donations by US arms of British firms in 1995 and 1996	\$
Glaxo Wellcome	1,098,998
SmithKline Beecham	264,950
British American Tobacco	211,782
ICI	176,450
Zeneca	130,000
NEC PLC	200,000
Pharmacia and Upjohn	170,500
King Organisation	80,000

promised not to make political donations in this country had made them in the US.

"If they have got operations in the US then I have no problem with the donations," he said. "But many multi-nationals say they make no political donations while giving money in America."

A recent study by a Washington-based group, the Center for Responsive Politics, examined records to show the total giving through non-American companies in the run up to the November 1996 federal elections. The companies' contributions are legal as long as they are made by their US arm and no foreign nationals are involved in the decision to donate.

The biggest donor was the Canadian Seagram Company, at \$2.1m (£1.4m), followed by BAT,

Rupert Murdoch's Australian NewsCorp which gave \$921,454 (£614,000) and Glaxo Wellcome.

A spokesman for BAT said the figures held by the company did not correspond exactly with those given, though its subsidiaries had PACs which distributed voluntary payments from employees.

Chris Major, a spokesman for Zeneca, said all the company's donations complied with US regulations. The firm's own figures showed it gave \$191,000 in 1996, including payments from its PAC, he added. Corporate giving was standard practice in the US. "It... facilitates access to legislators. In the States there is a special interest democracy which insists on active involvement in the political process," he said.

Today's news

Milkman charged over flood death

A milkman whose 14-year-old passenger drowned when their van was swept away in floods was yesterday charged with causing death by dangerous driving.

Warwickshire Police said Vincent Gallagher, 34, from the Stoke area of Coventry in the West Midlands, was bailed to appear before magistrates next month.

Carl Giles, also from the Stoke area of the city, died when the van was swept into the River Leam in Eathorpe, Warwickshire on Friday. A police search was launched and the teenager's body was discovered on Saturday under a bridge. Mr Gallagher was dragged from the water by a police officer who tied ropes around his waist and waded into the torrential water.

Peace move
Ulster Unionist Party leader David Trimble moved to break opposition from within his own ranks to the Northern Ireland Agreement.

Cancers missed
Breast screening of women in Humberside failed to detect cancers in 17 women because an outdated mammography machine was producing poor quality X-rays.

Most certainly need a licence as it was being used as a sexual establishment.

Charles Salter, a specialist in obscenity law, said: "Most London boroughs have adopted the Miscellaneous Provisions Act of 1982 which deals with licensing establishments, and it sounds very much like the artist is using the premises as a sex establishment, in which case she would need a licence."

But Mr Chappel said he had checked with a lawyer who had assured him that the show was legal. "It's art and so it's allowed," he said.



How to develop an extraordinary memory

Have you noticed how your memory always lets you down just when you need it most?

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The consummate artist - or just selling sex?

By Kate Watson-Smyth



An artist is today planning to sell her body as well as her paintings in what should be one of the most outrageous art exhibitions ever to be staged in London.

Angela Marshall will admit people to a gallery one at a time and paint a picture while they are there. If they want to buy it, and crucially, if she decides to sell it to them, they will have to perform a sexual act with her.

A small picture will cost £25 and require oral sex; a medium-size picture is full sex,

at £50 and for a large painting, at £75, "anything kinky".

Alex Chappel, curator of *Fuckart and Pimp* at the Decima Gallery in south-east London, said: "It is essential that the painter have sex with Angela in order for the art to be consummated. It is not art until its owner has done so."

Selected members of the public will also be invited to watch the painting taking place and the subsequent "consummation".

The gallery is fully booked today - with six one-hour sessions - and most of Saturday. Ms Marshall, who comes from

Los Angeles, has already met all the clients.

"I had to meet them first to tell if I would feel like selling a painting to them and I think I will be able to," she said.

"I have never had sex with a bunch of men in a row before but I don't find that a problem. Maybe I will only sell a couple, but I am really not concerned about the sex. It is about the art and the interaction with the person."

But questions were last night raised about the legality of the show, when a leading barrister said the gallery would al-

most certainly need a licence as it was being used as a sexual establishment.

Charles Salter, a specialist in obscenity law, said: "Most London boroughs have adopted the Miscellaneous Provisions Act of 1982 which deals with licensing establishments, and it sounds very much like the artist is using the premises as a sex establishment, in which case she would need a licence."

But Mr Chappel said he had checked with a lawyer who had assured him that the show was legal. "It's art and so it's allowed," he said.

TOMORROW
IN YOUR
5-SECTION
INDEPENDENT



■ **CLOTHES
TO DIE FOR:**
what would
you wear to your
own funeral?
THE MAGAZINE

■ **ROCK N'
RAIL IN
THE USA:**
seeing America
from
the tracks
TIME OFF

■ **FACT AND
FICTION:**
investigating
Hercule Poirot's
Devon
TIME OFF

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Recycled paper made up
of 41% of the raw material for
UK newspapers in the
first half of 1997.

Trimble: 'Ulster deal is as good as it gets'

By Alan Murdoch
in Dublin

THE ULSTER Unionist Party leader, David Trimble, yesterday moved decisively to break opposition from within his own ranks to the Northern Ireland Agreement.

Stung by the Orange Order's failure on Wednesday to provide endorsement of the deal, he told rebels that regardless of their attitude, backing for the accord would grow within the party.

Mr Trimble predicted that the party's ruling body, the Ulster Unionist Council, which holds a crucial meeting tomorrow, would provide stronger backing than the 2-1 vote in favour by its executive last Saturday.

He said "I am not contemplating [defeat] because it's perfectly clear we're not going to fail. This party is not going to abandon the opportunity that is there."

"Yes, there's worries about policing and prisoners, but rather than letting those difficulties mesmerise us, we will get them sorted out." He insisted the party had "got a good deal."

Unlike the Stormont Agreement was "as good as it gets". Unlike Sunningdale and the Anglo-Irish Agreement, it would "re-inforce the Union" and deliver change in the Irish Constitution.

Wednesday's meeting of the Grand Orange Lodge, the ruling body of Northern Ireland's 60,000-strong Orange Order, decided to press the Prime Minister for more clarification of the terms.

Mo Mowlam, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, revealed she had intervened in an attempt to swing the Orange Order behind the agreement. She confirmed she had written to the organisation to spell out the issues at stake, and was waiting for its response.

Mr Trimble's weakest flank remains the failure of the majority of his parliamentary colleagues to support his position, with just three out of the nine other UUP MPs behind him.

He seized on yesterday's *Irish Times*/Guardian opinion poll showing only 14 per cent in the north against the deal. He said "people understand that this

offers a real chance for peace" and was "good for Unionism and bad for Republicanism".

Attempting to settle Unionist waverers, Mr Trimble claimed such a deal might not come around again for another generation. "Silence from Sinn Fein" since the Agreement meant they had had to accept the "legitimacy" of Northern Ireland he argued. A "clear linkage" had been made between decommissioning commitments and elected politicians taking office.

Elected Sinn Fein candidates would be entitled to enter the Northern Assembly, but be required to address the issue on entering an administration, Mr Trimble claimed. He said he had Mr Blair's assurance that "this will be made effective".

This interpretation was later disputed by Sinn Fein's vice-president Pat Doherty.

Mr Trimble said he would be very concerned if Northern voters gave less than 60 per cent backing for the Agreement in next month's referendum. If that happened Unionists would have to have "a careful think."

In the *Irish Times*/Guardian poll the Agreement won 73 per cent backing in the north and 61 per cent support in the Irish Republic, with "No" votes of 14 per cent (north) and 20 per cent (Republic).

There was 81 per cent approval from Sinn Fein voters. 70 per cent from UUP supporters, with SDLP and Alliance both 93 per cent, while 56 per cent in the province believed there was a strong chance of a lasting peace.

Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams said he had received a mixed response on the Agreement from republicans. Some told him the changes should have come 40 years ago. Others were fearful and reaction ranged from outright hostility to nervousness.

Army bomb experts yesterday suspended an incendiary device from a shop in Carrickfergus, Co Antrim. It had been spotted by a member of staff shortly after 2.30pm, police said. There was no warning and no claim of responsibility.

Ireland Feature, page 18



Something Moore: Installation technician Dave Bell cleans Redding Figure: Goujon 1956, by Henry Moore, one of 46 models included in an exhibition of the artist's work at Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Near Wakefield, to mark the centenary of his birth. Photograph: UNP

Asylum detention centres 'unsafe'

By Nicole Veash

AN overhaul of immigration detention centres was promised last night after a Government watchdog warned current conditions were "unsafe" for the asylum seekers and suspected illegal immigrants held in them.

Immigration minister Mike O'Brien said the current system was a "mess", but said the future lay in more detention centres, more tightly controlled by staff.

The Chief Inspector of Prisons, Sir David Ramsbotham, said conditions at Campsfield House in Oxfordshire were "unsafe and unsound" because

there were no clear rules and sanctions for detainees, and no legal duties imposed on staff.

"It is the absence of enforceable rules of conduct governing the behaviour of detainees and staff which convinces us that detention centres are currently unsafe for detainees," he said.

"Until clear rules and obligations are established for people in detention and for the staff who look after them, the prospect of repeat disturbances at Campsfield House will remain."

His main recommendations include:

- Expanding the detention system

to cope with the increased number of detainees, keeping asylum seekers out of prisons

■ Introducing judicial oversight on all asylum requests so uniformity in detention lengths could be achieved, while opening up the possibility of appeal

■ Reducing the period of detention to the minimum possible

"I believe that prison is not the right place to hold asylum seekers and detainees," he said.

"Their status is more closely analogous to that of unconvicted prisoners, or civil prisoners, than to convicted or sentenced criminal prisoners."

Mr O'Brien admitted the current system was a "mess" adding the report was a blow to protest groups who want an end to the detention system.

"We admit that existing legislation is inadequate to deal with detention and we are addressing this in our review. The current system is a mess," he said.

"There is considerable pressure on the regime and we need to expand the number of detention centres. I accept that many of the criticisms in the report are aimed at the Home Office, while the private sector has been praised."

Mr O'Brien said the Government

planned to change the relaxed hostel regime of the detention centres, described by Sir David as "aimless", into a more controlled, "structured" environment.

In a get-tough appeasement to middle England, he said new sanctions would be introduced, including withdrawal of privileges, use of photo identity cards and guidelines to allow all incoming mail for detainees to be opened by staff.

He added that a statement on asylum policy, part of a Home Office comprehensive spending review, would be available before the end of the summer session.

Social workers suspended over abuse allegations

By Roger Dobson

SIX social workers have been suspended as a result of allegations made against them during the North Wales Child Abuse tribunal.

The six, who work for a number of authorities in the region, have been suspended on full pay following evidence given

at the tribunal which has now completed its public evidence taking. More than 100 people were named as alleged abusers in the hearings, but only a handful remain working in the care system. It is understood that the six will face disciplinary investigations.

The suspensions, which have until now been kept confidential, will be seen as the first direct action as a result of allegations during the tribunal.

What could happen to other people named as abusers who no longer work in the care system is not known.

Tribunal chairman, Sir Ronald Waterhouse, has said that he will name names where appropriate in his final report,

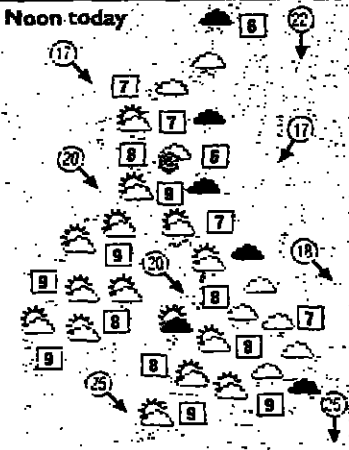
due out in the summer. It is estimated that allegations were made against 140 people during the hearings at which 250 alleged victims of abuse gave evidence.

Some alleged abusers had more than one allegation against them, and in one case, there were in excess of 70 individual complaints.

The tribunal has also been urged by lawyers for the councils to use their final report to recommend that the terms and conditions of staff be changed so that disciplinary proceedings brought against people working with children should be completed, even when the alleged perpetrator resigns or retires, or refuses to attend hearings.

The tribunal has also been urged by lawyers for the councils to use their final report to recommend that the terms and conditions of staff be changed so that disciplinary proceedings brought against people working with children should be completed, even when the alleged perpetrator resigns or retires, or refuses to attend hearings.

WEATHER



The wintry weather will be at an end for most of us although the eastern mountains in Scotland will see further snow during today, and it will still be cool for the bulk of the year in all parts. Eastern Scotland and England will have a cloudy day with showery outbreaks of rain, but the rain will mainly pelt out in south-east England during the afternoon. Northern Ireland, Wales and western parts of England will have a mix of sunny spells and well scattered showers.

Outlook for the next few days
Saturday will see an improvement in the weather across the UK with temperatures recovering and only the odd shower to nudge out by. However, there will be sunny breaks everywhere. Rain will arrive in Northern Ireland, south-west England and Wales in the early hours of Sunday, later clearing to sunshine and showers as the rain moves north and east to affect remaining parts of the UK, although north-east Scotland will remain dry.

British Isles weather

most recent available figure at noon local time

Aberdeen	Sh 6.43	Belfast	Sh 6.43
Anglesey	F 7.45	Exeter	Sh 6.43
Armagh	F 7.45	Gloucester	Sh 6.43
Belfast	F 7.45	Hereford	Sh 6.43
Birmingham	C 6.46	Jersey	Sh 6.43
Blackpool	F 7.45	Liverpool	Sh 6.43
Bournemouth	Sh 7.45	London	Sh 7.45
Brighton	Sh 7.45	Manchester	Sh 6.43
Bristol	R 6.43	Newcastle	Sh 4.39
Cardiff	R 5.41	Oxford	R 6.43
Carlisle	F 6.43	Plymouth	C 7.45
Canterbury	Sh 5.41	Scarborough	C 9.48
Dublin	F 7.45	Southampton	Sh 7.45
Edinburgh	Sh 2.36	Stroud	C 7.45
Exeter	R 6.48	Sturtevant	F 7.45
Glasgow	C 5.46	York	Sh 6.48

Air quality

Yesterday's readings

London	Good	Sheff	Good
S. England	Good	Stoke	Good
Wales	Good	Swindon	Good
C. England	Good	Torquay	Good
Strathclyde	Good	Walsley	Good
Scotland	Good	Warrington	Good
N. Ireland	Good	Widnes	Good

Out and about with AA Roadwatch

Call 0336 481777 for the latest local and national traffic news. Source: The Automobile Association. Calls charged at 50p per min at all times (inc VAT).

INDEPENDENT Weatherline

For the latest forecasts dial 0891 5009 followed by the two digits for your area indicated by the above map. Source: The Met Office. Calls charged at 50p per min at all times (inc VAT).

High tides	AM	HT	PM	HT
Belfast	05:47	6.8	18:03	6.8
Birmingham	02:55	8.7	15:13	8.4
Bournemouth	11:02	11.7	23:18	11.4
Hull (Albert Dock)	10:12	7.9	22:37	7.7
Glasgow	04:26	3.1	16:35	3.0
Dun Laoghaire	03:28	3.7	15:03	3.5

Lighting-up times

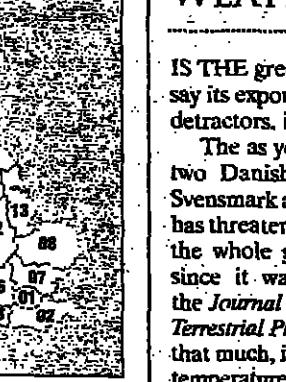
	20.30	to	06.15	Sun rises	06.01
Belfast	20.09	to	06.04	Sun sets	20.00
Birmingham	20.10	to	06.00	Moon sets	00.30
Bristol	20.27	to	06.05	Moon sets	00.29
London	20.00	to	06.09		
Manchester	20.13	to	06.03		
Newcastle	20.14	to	06.07		

World weather

most recent available figure at noon local time

Aberdeen	26.77	Chicago	26.77	London	26.77
Algeria	26.77	Copenhagen	26.77	Los Angeles	26.77
Amman	26.77	Dublin	26.77	Madrid	26.77
Ankara	26.77	Edinburgh	26.77	Moscow	26.77
Antwerp	26.77	Geneva	26.77	New York	26.77
Athens	26.77	Helsinki	26.77	Ottawa	26.77
Auckland	26.77	Istanbul	26.77	Paris	26.77
Bahia	26.77	Jerusalem	26.77	Rome	26.77
Bangkok	26.77	Khartoum	26.77	Seoul	26.77
Barcelona	26.77	Kobe	26.77	Singapore	26.77
Berlin	26.77	Lima	26.77	Sydney	26.77
Birmingham	26.77	London	26.77	Taipei	26.77
Bombay	26.77	Manila	26.77	Tokyo	26.77
Buenos Aires	26.77	Mexico	26.77	Winnipeg	26.77
Burgas	26.77	Montevideo	26.77	Zurich	26.77
Calcutta	26.77	Nairobi	26.77		
Cairo	26.77	Rangoon	26.77		
Canton	26.77	San Francisco	26.77		
Cebu	26.77	Sao Paulo	26.77		
Chongqing	26.77	Shanghai	26.77		
Colombo	26.77	Seoul	26.77		
Dacca	26.77	Singapore	26.77		
Damascus	26.77	Sydney	26.77		
Dar es Salaam	26.77	Taipei	26.77		
Delhi	26.77	Tokyo	26.77		
Dhaka	26.77	Winnipeg	26.77		
Dublin	26.77	Zurich	26.77		
Dun Laoghaire	26.77				
Edinburgh	26.77				
Exeter	26.77				
Glasgow	26.77				
Geneva	26.77				
Haarlem	26.77				
Hamburg	26.77				
Hankow	26.77				
Hong Kong	26.77				
Hull	26.77				
Istanbul	26.77				
Jerusalem	26.77				
Khartoum	26.77				
Kobe	26.77				
Kuala Lumpur	26.77				
La Paz	26.77				
Lima	26.77				
London	26.77				
Los Angeles	26.77				
Madrid	26.77				
Manila	26.77				
Mexico	26.77				
Montevideo	26.77				
Moscow	26.77				
Mumbai	26.77				
Muscat	26.77				
Nairobi	26.77				
Rangoon	26.77				
San Francisco	26.77				
Sao Paulo	26.77				
Seoul	26.77				
Singapore	26.77				
Sydney	26.77				
Taipei	26.77				
Tokyo	26.77				
Winnipeg	26.77				
Zurich	26.77				

Atlantic chart, noon today



Low W will move east. Low A will move slowly north and fill. Low B will remain in situ. High C will intensify.

MICHAEL HANLON WEATHER WISE

IS THE greenhouse theory dead? No, say its exponents. But, according to its detractors, it is gravely ill.

The as yet little-publicised work of two Danish meteorologists, Henrik Svensmark and Eigil Friis-Christensen, has threatened to throw a spanner into the whole global-warming consensus since it was published last year in the *Journal of Atmospheric and Solar-Terrestrial Physics*. The scientists claim that much, if not all, of the 0.5C rise in temperature seen across the globe in the past 100 years can be attributed to changes in the behaviour of the Sun, rather than to man-made pollution.

They tentatively postulated an elegant mechanism, to the effect that changes in the intensity of the solar wind - the spray of sub-atomic particles thrown out into deep space by the Sun - could affect the amount of cosmic rays entering the Earth's atmosphere. Cosmic rays are produced by exploding stars, and, the Danes say, may have an effect on cloud formation here on Earth. More solar wind equals less cosmic rays, equals less clouds, equals global warming, as clouds reflect sunlight.

In January, scientists at Cern, the European nuclear research centre near Geneva, proposed a £100,000 experiment to test the Danes' theory. Construct a box about a foot-square, fill it with gas of the same composition as the Earth's atmosphere, and zap it with artificial cosmic rays. If clouds form, theory proved. Man-made global warming dead and buried. Except it won't happen quite like that. The money needed to test this part of the Danes' theory is peanuts compared to the squillion-dollar greenhouse industry, but that is no guarantee that it will be awarded. Even if the cosmic ray-cloud connection is made, many people will choose to disbelieve, or ignore the data. There are a lot of vested interests in the Global Warming debate.

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Old X-ray machine missed breast cancers

By Jeremy Lawrence
Health Editor

ROUTINE breast screening of women in Humberside failed to detect cancers in some women because an outdated mammography machine was producing poor-quality X-rays, it was disclosed yesterday.

Seventeen women were found to have cancer from among 1,000 who were recalled for repeat screening last

January after checks showed their mammograms were not sufficiently clear.

Humberside health officials said that when the new mammograms were compared with the originals, there were six in which it "may have been possible" to detect the cancer. In the remaining 11, it is unclear whether the cancer was hidden because of the poor quality of the original mammogram or whether it had had developed

since the mammogram had been taken.

The problem was discovered after officials from the National Breast Screening Service noticed that the cancer detection rate in the area had been below the national average for two years running.

They ordered a re-inspection of 16,000 mammograms made by the Humberside Breast Screening Service between April 1995 and March 1996

which showed that some did not meet quality standards. This led to 1,000 women being recalled.

A spokeswoman for the National Screening Service said the poor-quality mammograms resulted from an old mammography machine which has since been replaced.

The same model of machine is still in use in Cheshire but is scheduled for replacement, and mammograms are being double-checked. The machine

was also used in the Norwich and Pennine screening services but has been replaced. "This model is out of date," the spokeswoman said.

A Humberside breast-screening service spokeswoman said staff had had problems adjusting the paddles on the machine that squeeze the breast to ensure a clear image. "We reported our concerns to the Medical Devices Agency and decided to change the machine

but to my knowledge it still passes all the quality tests," she said.

Ian Galloway, medical director at Royal Hull Hospitals NHS Trust, which manages the breast-screening service, said: "We apologise for the distress these women have experienced and assure all of them that we have acted swiftly to ensure they receive the best possible treatment."

Mr Galloway said that none of the six women whose cancer

could have been detected earlier had noticed any symptoms of the disease before the re-screening.

This meant their cancers had been caught early and, with treatment, their prognosis was good.

"Screening is very effective for the vast majority of women and although it is not 100 per cent accurate it remains the best way of improving the outlook in breast cancer," he said.

"I want to thank all the 1,000 women who were involved in the re-screen and apologise for any anxiety we may have caused them."

During the standard three-year interval between screenings a small number of women are expected to develop cancer.

Mr Galloway said that even with the 11 extra cases the Humberside service falls within accepted limits for these interval cancers.

Panto comic who provides the Labour one-liners

WHEN Roy Hudd mentioned on Radio 4 this week that he wrote jokes for both the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister, he neglected to mention how it all nearly went horribly, if comically, wrong at last year's Labour Party conference, writes David Lister.

Hudd received a call from one of Tony Blair's aides, panicking that on the eve of the PM's big speech he had still not received Hudd's gags.

"But I faxed them to you, on the same number as last year," he said.

"That was Blackpool," the aide groaned, "we're in Brighton this year. You've gone and sent the jokes to the Tories."

"Oh well," Hudd responded, "Do they pay the same fee?"

It's no surprise that Hudd had a ready one-liner. The comic is not just a veteran of pantomime, writing some and appearing in one every season since 1960; he is also a sage on the subject of panto, music hall and variety this century, treating all three with academic seriousness. He is president of the British Music Hall Society and grew up watching the likes of Max Miller, Max Wall and Bud Flanagan in the last days of music hall.

Two seasons ago he caused a stir when he said that the use of soap stars in panto was besmirching an honourable theatrical tradition. "People like that can sometimes be used cleverly in character roles, but for the leads, pantos need professional actors with a real passion for this strange but wonderful hybrid form."

He is also maddened by political correctness in pantomime, still wincing at the memory of a director who changed his script for *Cinderella* so that the Prince became a president.

IN THE NEWS ROY HUDD

"But Blair and Prescott can be assured of getting jokes for all the family from Hudd. He has hit out at panto directors who allow rude jokes. As he memorably put it on one occasion, 'I've seen people do things with sausages in my pantos which I certainly never intended.'"

Even when the jokes are risqué, they are always on the right side of vulgar. John Prescott, in a party conference speech in opposition, with gags supplied by Hudd, said of Michael Heseltine: "He is the *Kama Sutra* of the Conservative Party. He's been in every position except Number Ten." Good music hall stuff, cheeky but harmless.

At the same conference Blair received a more topical joke from Hudd. Remarking on Eric Cantona's attack on a soccer fan, Blair remarked: "Wasn't it good to see Eric Cantona back in action? Let's hope



Tony Blair: used Cantona joke to attack the Tories

this time he remembers kicking people in the teeth is the Tory government's job."

Hudd started in variety in 1957 after working as a Butlin's redcoat. Television shows in the Sixties cemented his reputation as an engaging, pop-eyed, leery looking comic. But it is his Radio 2 series *The News Huddlines*, running since 1976, which won him his biggest audience.

His life has not been without its traumas. His mother died during the war, and it was only years later that he discovered she had committed suicide. He was brought up by his grandmother, and did not see his father for 20 years. The estrangement was keenly felt by Hudd, who did not attend his father's funeral. He is married to a dancer 22 years his junior and has a grown-up son, Max, from a previous marriage.

For all his inconvertible comic talent, Hudd, at 61, is not the most obvious comedian to contribute to Cool Britannia. He must also have to draw on all his years of experience to write gags for the very different personalities, and presumably very different humours, of Blair and Prescott. But both are fans, particularly of *The News Huddlines*, which, like their speeches, actually benefits from the humour of a team of writers - writing in the style of Hudd, distilled from Max Miller, and drawing on a long and very English tradition.

And, though Hudd claims to be a socialist, Blair and Prescott should be aware that he is above all a pro. Though he has written gags for Neil Kinnock, he readily admits: "We would have done it for the Tories. We would have done it for the Liberals. Labour happened to ask. We like doing jokes."



Roy Hudd: 'I've seen people do things with sausages in my pantos which I certainly never intended'

Thatcher's script writer dies at 78

By David Lister
Arts News Editor

SIR RONALD MILLAR, the writer who created one of Baroness Thatcher's most celebrated lines, "the lady's not for turning", has died aged 78.

He was a distinguished West End playwright and spent four years as a screenwriter in Hollywood before beginning his political writing career at the age of 50.

Lady Thatcher gave a heartfelt tribute to the writer yesterday, describing him as a man of "remarkable talent" who gave freely of his abilities. She said Sir Ronald was "a real believer in our whole philosophy".

"This is the loss of a very great friend who contributed so much to my being able to express what I felt and meant in words that I think only an author could have written," she said. "When you are struggling for words, struggling to put something in a way which will make an impact, Ronnie knew just how to do it."

He was in the habit of leaving his best lines out of early drafts of speeches for Lady Thatcher - because he knew she always rejected the initial versions. He also suggested to Lady Thatcher that she should make her dramatic recital of the words of St Francis of Assisi just before she entered Number 10 Downing Street on the day in 1979 when she became Prime Minister.

He was said to have treated the then Mrs Thatcher like a star - something he learned from his days in the theatre and in Hollywood. Sir Ronald remained a member of the Conservative inner circle, working with John Major until the last election.

He began working for Sir Edward Heath after being asked at a dinner party to pen a five-minute party political broadcast. He worked for Lady Thatcher from 1975, and was knighted when she became Prime Minister.

"The lady's not for turning", a phrase Lady Thatcher used during a conference speech at Brighton in 1980, was a reference to Christopher Fry's play *The Lady's not for Turning*. Obituaries, page 18

A ROLE BEQUEATHED: Dennis Potter stipulated in his will that Hudd play the role of spoonerising agent Ben Baglin in *Karslake*.

HIS MOST REPEATED ROLE: He played the sergeant major in the 1970s *Tea TV* ad.

ON POLITICAL DIFFERENCES WITH HUDDLINES CO-STAR JUNE WHITFIELD:

"The great bone of contention, of course, is that she's a rabid Tory. I'm an old-time Anthony Wedgewood Ben-type lefty, and that's when we start."

"We never have arguments 'cos June won't have an argument. 'When I go to a panto and see the Good Fairy coming in from the left side of the stage, I know right away it's not going to be worth much. It's an old tradition in the theatre that Good always enters from the right.'"

HIS FURY AT UNSCHOOLED PANTOMIME DIRECTORS:

"When I go to a panto and see the Good Fairy coming in from the left side of the stage, I know right away it's not going to be worth much. It's an old tradition in the theatre that Good always enters from the right."

ONE OF HIS FAVOURITE "AWFUL JOKES"

"Scuse me butcher, I want two pork chops and make them lean." "Certainly sir, which way?" "You can say what you like, but they just don't write them like that anymore."

Microsoft catches the millennium bug

By Charles Arthur
Science and Technology Editor

EVEN Microsoft has the millennium bug. The biggest software company in the world admitted yesterday that two dozen of its products, including the Windows95 and Windows NT operating systems, have problems dealing with the year 2000 - and three of its older programs have serious flaws.

Typically, Microsoft sought to play down the importance of the problems, describing them as "minor issues" and blaming them on - well, society. "I think

it's important to recognise the sociological aspect of the year 2000 problem, that people think and work in two-digit dates," said Jason Matusow, manager of Microsoft's year 2000 compliance program. "That's true for people who are programming computers as well."

But the trouble will not be minor for users of Word 5.0 for DOS, a word processing package: anyone creating a file with it from 1 January 2000 will find their computer frozen.

Similarly, a Microsoft database program called Access 2.0, released in April 1994, reads two-

digit year dates as belonging to the 20th century. That can be avoided by always writing years with four digits, but not everyone might remember to do that. The error persists in Microsoft's "Office Professional Edition" suite of software, up to version 4.3, as it includes Access 2.0.

Similarly, anyone using the Windows95 operating system in two years' time will find that its "Find File" facility will not work correctly for dates past 31 December 1999. Although accurate file searches will be possible, the utility will not be able to sort files by the date of the most recent

change. The millennium bug arose because programmers saved space by referring to years only by their last two digits. That's fine until 2000, when computers and other devices running such software might read "00" as earlier than "99".

Microsoft's solution? Buy new programs. "Microsoft recommends users of those programs upgrade to later editions," said a statement. For most products with minor compliance issues, it will offer free software patches - available over the Internet - to fix the problems.

By Paul McCann
Media Editor

THE BBC is considering plans for a dedicated nightly sports news programme as a way of making up for the loss of live sport to satellite television.

The 10-minute programme would air late in the evening seven nights a week using highlights from the day's sport. The news show, which could start in the autumn, would also contain previews and analysis of coming events.

It has been proposed by the Corporation's new head of

sport, Bob Shennan, as part of a year-long review of the BBC's news output. All the BBC's news programmes are currently being researched and studied and now Mr Shennan feels a dedicated programme is a way of making the broadcaster's sport coverage more comprehensive.

He believes the BBC's sports coverage is sporadic and needs a regular fixture in the schedule. "It is a goal for me that we should persuade the BBC to take a daily sports news programme from my department. [It would be] the definite summary of what's gone on that day in the world of sport."

Over the last five years the BBC has lost more and more live sports events, such as English rugby union matches, golf and overseas test cricket to Rupert Murdoch's Sky Sports channel. Yet it still has a large sports news gathering operation for its regular bulletins, the rolling cable station News 24 and Radio 5 Live.

BSkyB has used its exclusive sports coverage as the main driver to force sports fans to buy dishes and subscriptions to its service.

Sport is increasingly becoming the main battleground for all of the media. In the last three years newspapers have increased their sports coverage from simple match reports to extensive separate sections with acres of analysis and features. Research last year found that sports pages had increased tenfold in three years and were challenging domestic news for the lion's share of pages.

All the departments are currently being consolidated into a new radio and television sports department at Television Centre.

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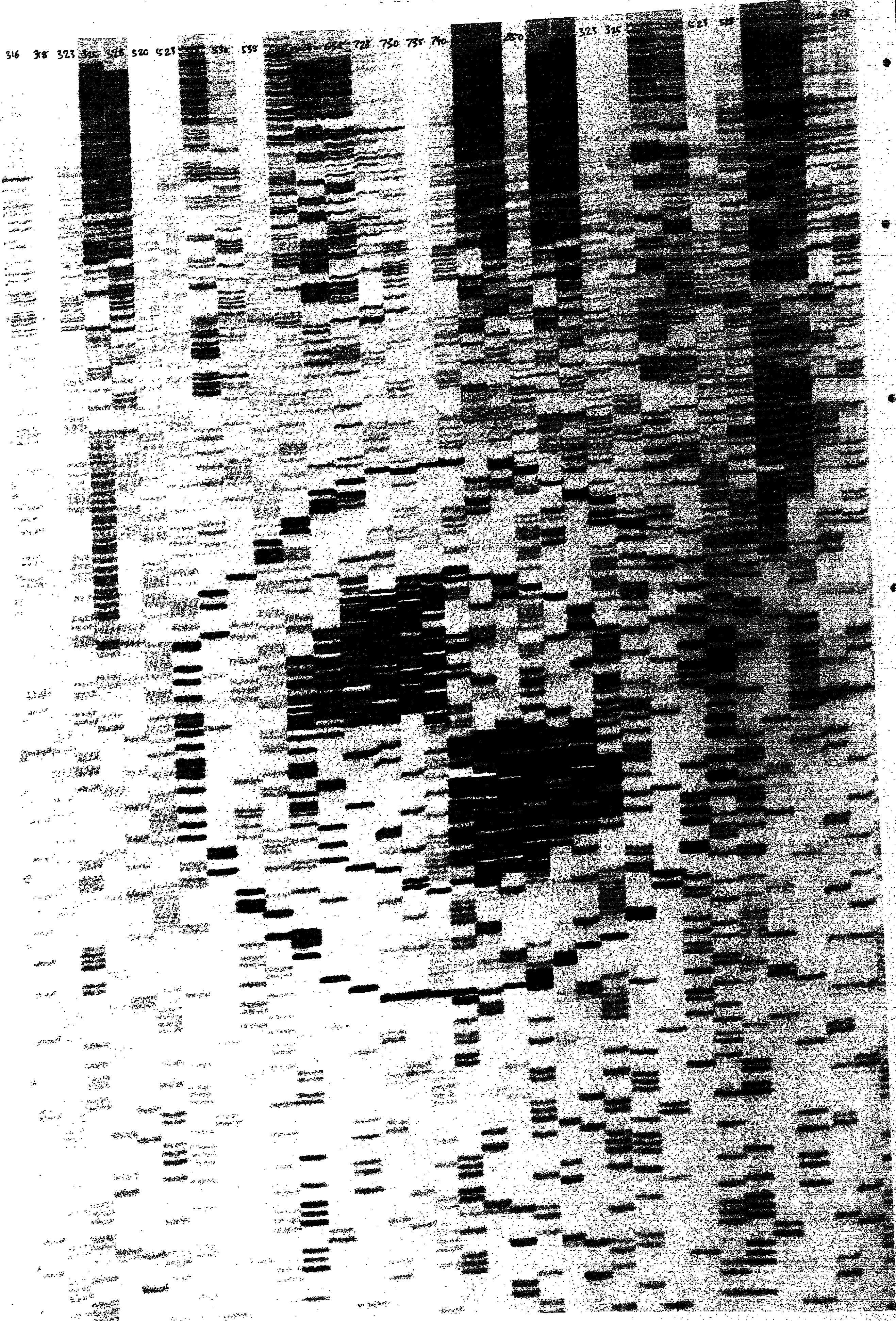
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Diplomatic snub for Labour

THE British embassy in Washington raised eyebrows when it invited Sinn Féin's Gerry Adams to a St. Patrick's day lunch, but there is one political group which the embassy seems determined never to let inside its palatial Lutyens-designed building on Massachusetts Avenue. That group is the British Labour Party. "None of us has ever been invited to the embassy," said Keith Tarr-Whelan, the party's US chairman, to Pandora yesterday. "It is very strange. I always thought it was a bit stupid. The embassy's line is that they don't want to invite Brits there. They only want to invite Americans," Tarr-Whelan said. But he reckons that even on that front our diplomats are not too impressive. "My wife is US Ambassador to the United Nations on women's affairs, and she's never been invited to the embassy either."

No 10's selective line up

PANDORA popped by 10 Downing Street's new web site which went on-line yesterday. There were impressive graphics of former prime ministers: Walpole, Macmillan, Douglas-Home, Wilson, Heath, Callaghan, Thatcher and Blair. But Paddy Ashdown will look in vain for any sign of Lloyd George (left) or any other Liberal prime minister. Hopefully, this site will be kept more up-to-date than similar ones. When Pandora visited the old Prime Minister's Office site yesterday, its latest information was from 27 February. New Britain, old press release.

Empty Tory purse?

YOU may recall reading in this newspaper about the beleaguered Huntingdon Conservative Club located in John Major's constituency. The club went into liquidation shortly after the May election. Now the local Tory-controlled council has written off £3,160.84 in debt owed to it by the club. "They have done nothing illegal," said Huntingdon's local Liberal Democrat group leader, Terry Clough, to Pandora. "But when you consider how much the Conservative Party spends in this area on printed literature and propaganda - thousands and thousands of pounds - it makes people wonder why they can't afford to pay this debt. Now the ratepayers will have to make it good."

A Titanic mistake

YESTERDAY the *Mirror* marked the anniversary of the *Titanic* by reprinting its original 86-year-old coverage of the catastrophe in which approximately 1,500 people died. The reprinted headlines included "Everyone Safe", "Morning of Suspense Ends in Message of Relief" and, just in case readers harboured even a trace of anxiety, "Every man woman and child on the great liner is safe". In retrospect, perhaps today's *Mirror* would have been wiser to have reprinted a later edition of its 1912 paper.

Pandora

DAILY POEM

From "The Ballad of Reading Gaol"

By Oscar Wilde

With sudden shock the prison-clock
Smote on the shivering air,
And from all the gaol rose up a wail
Of impotent despair.
Like the sound that frightened marshes hear
From some leper in his lair.

And as one sees most fearful things
In the crystal of a dream,
We saw the greasy hempen rope
Hooked to the blackened beam,
And heard the prayer the hangman's snare
Strangled into a scream.

And all the woe that moved him so
That he gave that bitter cry,
And the wild regrets, and the bloody sweats,
None knew so well as I:
For he who lives more lives than one
More deaths than one must die.

This is our final selection from the expanded edition of the Penguin Classics anthology *Poetry of the 1890s* (Penguin, £8.99), edited by R. K. R. Thornton and Marion Thain. Wilde published his Ballad in 1898, the year after his release.

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Think-tank laments fake Britain 'awash with sentimentality'

David Walker on claims that Diana's funeral was the peak of national decadence

BLAIR'S Britain is "awash with sentimentality" and Diana, Princess of Wales - in life and in death - bears a lot of the blame. According to the Social Affairs Unit, the quirky conservative think-tank, the day of the princess's funeral was a peak of British decadence.

In its report published today, entitled *Faking It*, the unit says: "In that mob grief feeling was elevated above reason, caring above principles, personal gratification above commitment and propriety and the full extent of modern sentimentality made available for anyone with eyes to see."

According to the report, Britain has become over-sentimental about poor people, about black people, about the environment, about fiction and about animals. Digby Anderson, the unit's director, who writes about cooking for the *Spectator* magazine, is especially harsh about "food sentimentalists" who do not like to eat kidneys.

Sentimentality is all around us, even in the concert hall. The



Mob grief: The princess's funeral showed how feeling had become elevated above reason, the think-tank says

Photograph: John Voos

best composers used to make jokes to dilute the sentimentality of their music. But nowadays everyone is too serious, especially performers on period instruments who take themselves too seriously.

It is no coincidence that the flood of sentiment is at spate

when Labour is in power. Tony Blair is said to have elevated "the People over rank, tradition and history".

On his watch, children are being indulged more and fringe medicine has grown in popularity, leading to pseudo-diagnosis.

"Having tried homeopathy without success, why not have a shot at acupuncture, chiropractic, iridology, Bach's flower remedies? And so on down the slippery slope."

The Social Affairs Unit would like people stoically to accept they have an illness. "Sen-

timentality damages the practice of medicine when it interferes with an ability to make tough decisions. The only answer to the question so often asked by the afflicted - 'why me?' - is that, biologically speaking, it is health which is rare and extraordinary, and disease and

death that are the norm.

As for Diana, among her many problems was that she had never been forced to read Edmund Burke, the 18th-century Whig writer and politician who argued that certain institutions should be covered with "pleasing illusions" and "decent drapery". She did not understand monarchy's necessary mystique - witness her referring to the Queen as her "mother-in-law".

Among Diana's other problems was her belief that duty and commitment are harmful and repressive. "In the therapeutic world in which Diana increasingly moved, one's only duty is to one's own feelings, their expression and fulfilment. If the world does not like it, too bad. You scream, you give vent to your anger, you throw yourself downstairs."

"This is literally infantilism, but it is part of what was being celebrated in Westminster Abbey on 6 September."

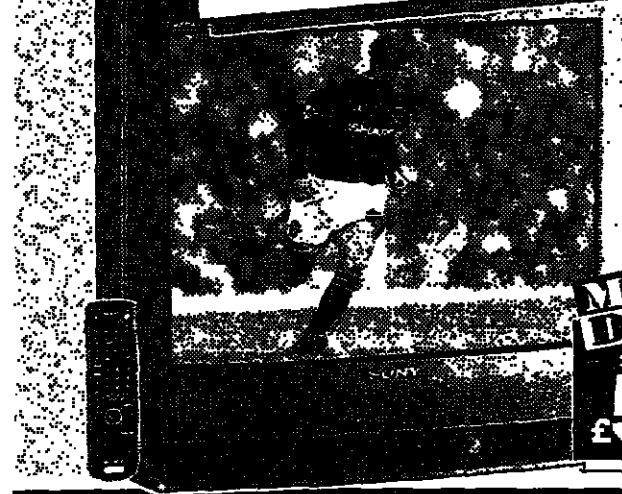
Suzanne Moore, page 17

Faking It edited by Digby Anderson and Peter Mullen: Social Affairs Unit, £15.95.

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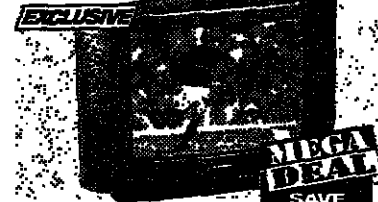


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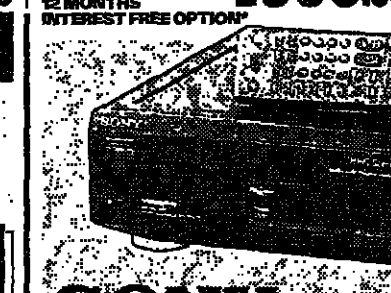
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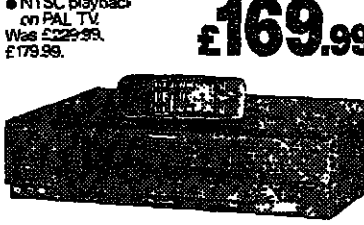
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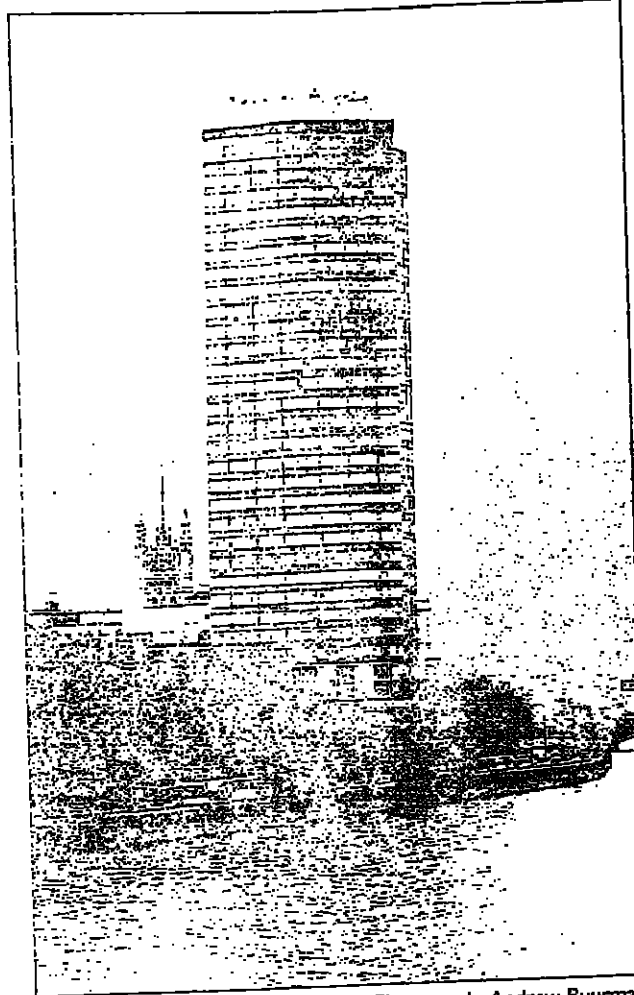
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'Monstrous': The Millbank tower Photograph: Andrew Buurman

'Ugly' buildings should be destroyed, says MP

By Andrew Buncombe

APPARENTLY unconcerned that he might be committing treason, a Labour MP yesterday cited Buckingham Palace as one of Britain's "ugly, grey" buildings that should be razed and replaced for the Millennium.

Barry Sheerman, MP for Huddersfield, suggested that eyesores in towns and cities around Britain should be knocked down and young, innovative architects be invited to design alternatives.

Launching his Millennium Destruction Challenge, he said: "Each of us knows of an architectural monstrosity which richly deserves to be eliminated. The Millennium is a perfect project for a fresh start."

Mr Sheerman, chairman of the campaign group Networking for Industry, said there were scores of buildings that were ripe

for knocking down. In London he cited Battersea power station, the Millbank tower and the Department of the Environment's offices in Westminster. He also mentioned others around the country, including the Bull Ring in Birmingham.

Mr Sheerman said that the removal of Buckingham Palace would present the Royal Family with no problems as to where to live. "I would suggest that it

could be replaced by a beautifully designed building... created by a modern architect. I am sure Prince Charles would approve."

Whether Prince Charles or any other members of the Royal Family would like to see the destruction of Buckingham Palace, designed by John Nash in 1819, was unclear yesterday. A palace spokeswoman said: "Buckingham Palace is... owned by the state so I presume it would

need a decision by Parliament before it could be knocked down."

A spokeswoman for Prince Charles, who famously criticised architectural "carbuncles", said she was unsure if he would want to jump on this latest bandwagon. But she added: "He has been outspoken about bad architecture."

Mr Sheerman's idea did, however, receive support from Simon Jenkins, a member of the Millennium Commission. "I only wish [Mr Sheerman] had come up with it three or four years ago when the commission was looking for ideas," he said.

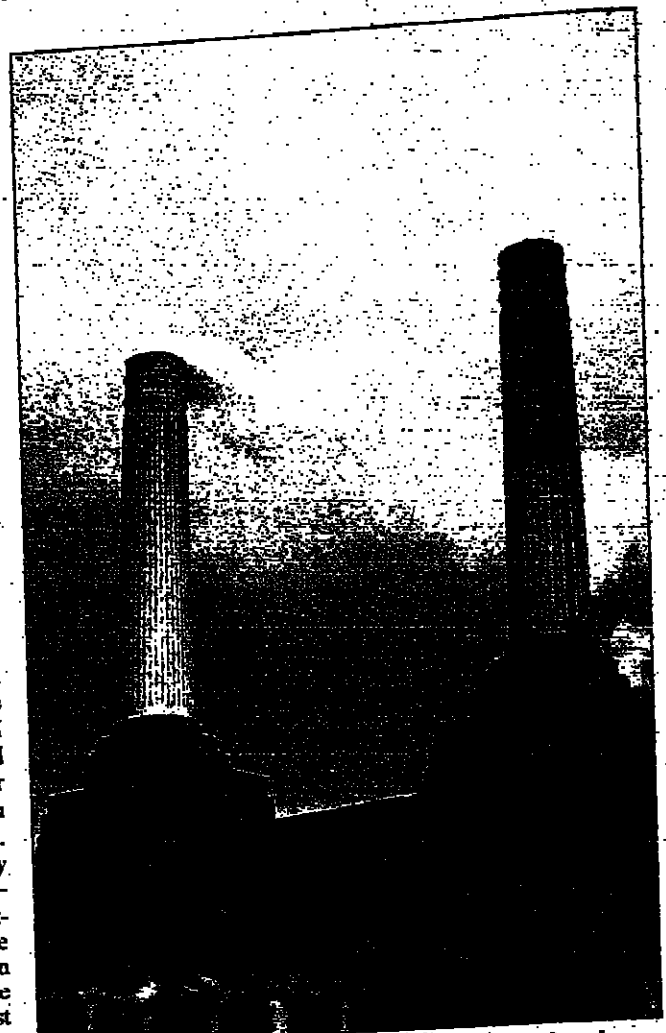
The architect Jan Kaplicky added: "I think it would be unprofessional to suggest knocking buildings down but the Government could commission... some beautiful things here and there. But when was the last public building commissioned in Britain - 30, 50 years ago?"

Carve their names with pride

POST-WAR public sculptures long battered by the twin assaults of critics and vandals yesterday found a new champion as they were given listed status.

Tony Banks, heritage minister, unveiled a set of 20 pieces of modern art gaining State recognition after years grazing shopping centres and housing estates. Among those awarded the Grade II star are Blind Beggar and his Dog, by Elisabeth Frink, 1958;

the Merchant Seaman's Memorial, by Edward Maule and Charles Wheeler, 1952-55, both in east London; the British Medical Association Memorial, Tavistock Square, James Woodford, 1954; and The Bull, Alton Estate, Wandsworth, Robert Clatworthy, 1961. Outside London, Grade II listings include Woman with a Fish, Northampton, Frank Dobson, 1951; and Epidaurus, St Ives, Cornwall, by Barbara Hepworth, 1961.



'Ripe for removal': Battersea power station, in London

British businessman found dead in China

A BRITISH businessman has been found dead in China, British embassy officials said yesterday.

The body of the man, who has not been identified, was found in a flat in the city of Qingdao, south-east of Peking. He is believed to have been killed last week but the circumstances of his death have not yet emerged. An embassy spokesman said that two Chinese people had been seen running from the flat on the night he died. The killing comes one month after an American engineer was killed in a hotel room in Guangdong province. A spokesman for the Foreign Office said: "I can confirm a British businessman has been found dead in Qingdao and the local police are investigating." He refused to disclose whether the dead man's identity is known.

Tories promise fresh future

THE Tories launched their local elections campaign yesterday promising a "fresh future" and insisting they had learnt the lessons of their election defeat. They urged voters to back the Tories in the poll on 7 May and end Labour "failure", high council taxes and "shoddy" services.

Lord Parkinson, the party chairman, admitted: "We know we have a long way to go in restoring the British people's trust in the party, but we are making progress." He said the party had won 66 council seats since the defeat last May.

Heritage plans for Avebury

A MANAGEMENT plan to take one of Britain's most important prehistoric sites into the next millennium was launched yesterday.

English Heritage has drawn up measures to protect and promote the Avebury World Heritage Site in Wiltshire. The site, covering 22.5 square kilometres, which includes the famous Avebury stone circles, dates back more than 4,000 years. Sir Jocelyn Stevens, chairman of English Heritage, yesterday visited Avebury to launch a draft plan. The organisation is asking anybody interested in the site to put forward their views.

Trials of 'little belly-achers'

CHILDREN who complain of persistent tummy aches are more likely than others to suffer psychiatric disorders such as anxiety and depression in later life. Psychiatrists have found that children aged seven to fifteen with recurrent abdominal pain tended to come from anxious families and have neurotic mothers. At the age of 36, an unusually high proportion of them were found to suffer psychiatric disorders.

Dr Matthew Hotopf and colleagues from King's College School of Medicine, London, say in the *British Medical Journal*: "Little belly-achers do not grow up to be big belly-achers but do grow up to suffer from anxiety or depression." The study involved 3,637 children born in 1946 who participated in a Medical Research Council health survey. — Jeremy Laurence

Safety claims for McDonald's

MCDONALD'S, the fast food chain, could face up to 10 claims from people who allegedly suffered serious burns from its hot drinks, it was disclosed yesterday.

Solicitors are hoping to secure joint legal aid for a test case, according to solicitor Malcolm Johnson, whose Cambridge-based firm is helping to co-ordinate the action. Mr Johnson alleged that some of the victims were scarred for life by scalding drinks. One case involves a five-year-old north London boy.

A McDonald's spokesman, Robert Parker, would not comment on possible legal action. "The safety of our customers and staff is of the highest priority for McDonald's," he said.

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هيكمان للأحبار

Keep gifts secret, says Tory donor

By Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

POLITICAL donations should be kept secret no matter how big they are, a major donor to the Tory party said yesterday.

Sir Stanley Kalms, who was knighted in John Major's last New Year's honours, told the Neill inquiry into political funding that it was up to politicians to keep politics clean, not donors.

He also hinted that Tony Blair might have been compromised by the Bernie Ecclestone affair, in which the £1m Labour donor met the Prime Minister to plead that Formula One be exempt from a tobacco sponsorship ban.

As chairman of Dixons, Sir Stanley presided over donations totalling £100,000 between 1993 and 1997, though the company has now stopped its payments. He has also made personal donations.

"It's a private decision made with tax-paid money and I ought to have the right to distribute that money without any public disclosure," he said.

Corporate donations were on

the wane, though, he said, and he had been persuaded by the argument that not all Dixons' shareholders would want their money to go to political causes. "I was comfortable supporting the Conservative Party but times move on," he said.

Asked if the Prime Minister had been compromised by Bernie Ecclestone's donation, he said: "I would admit that *prima facie* there is a certain discomfort about this particular example."

"The moment you cross that border and go to see a minister on a specific rather than a general [matter], you break every rule of the game. Ministers must have their own standards."

Later in the session, a Labour MP warned that donations like the one given by Bernie Ecclestone could have a corrupting effect on politics. Martin Linton, MP for Battersea, suggested the state should give "aid in kind" to political parties through tax credits on donations of less than £1,000 and through free access to advertising space and hoardings.

Without such aid there would be either a "slum democracy" in which parties were underfunded, or do-

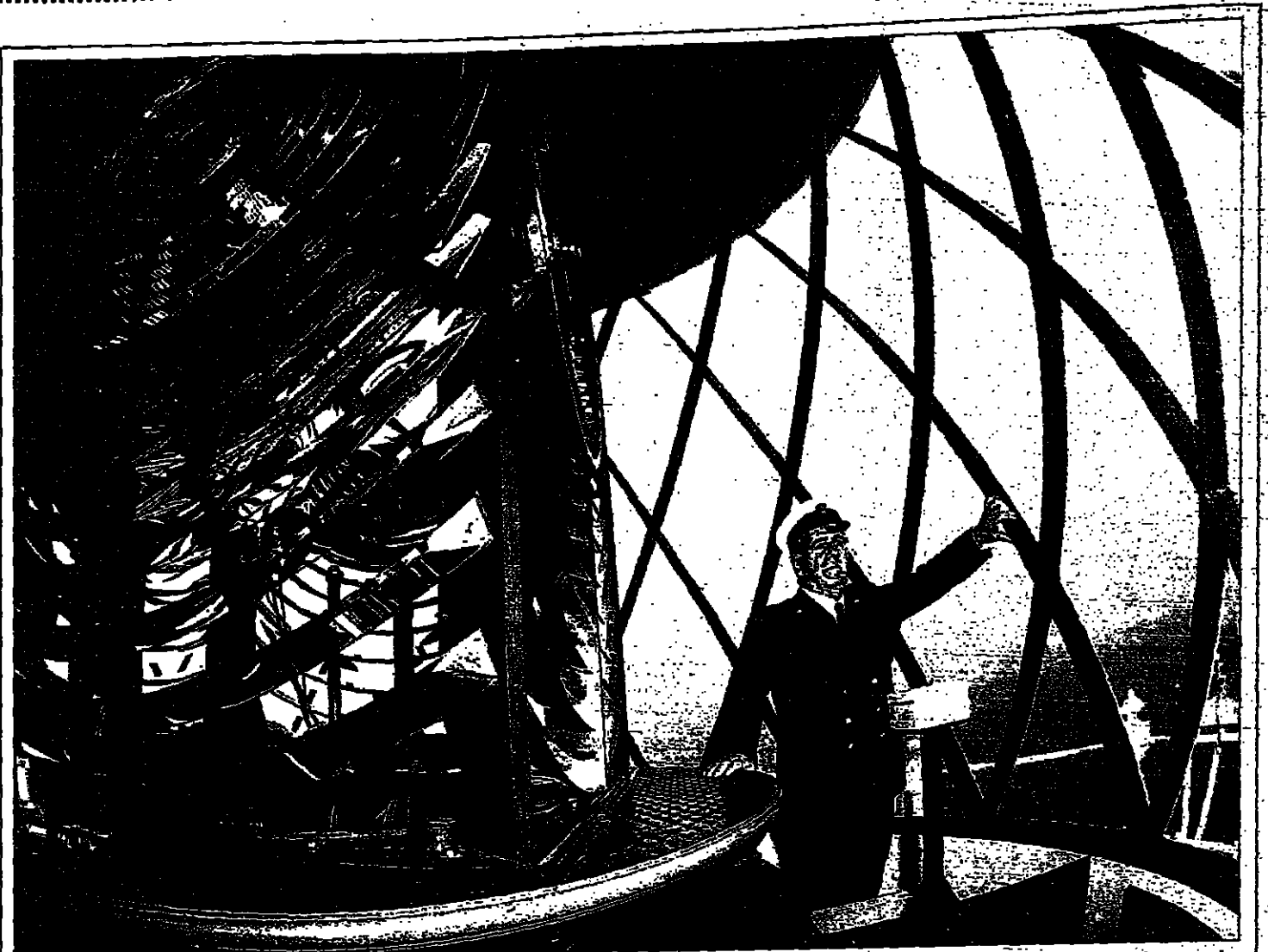
nations would play too large a part. "The alternative is a sleaze democracy, where the parties are forced into an unhealthy reliance on funding from private individuals which will sooner or later compromise their integrity, for example Asil Nadir, John Latsis or Bernie Ecclestone," he said.

"The danger is not that there will be corrupt deals behind closed doors. It is that parties will feel beholden to their major donors, nervous of offending them, anxious not to jeopardise the possibility of another large donation."

The committee is still waiting to hear from Mr Ecclestone whether he is prepared to come before them and give evidence.

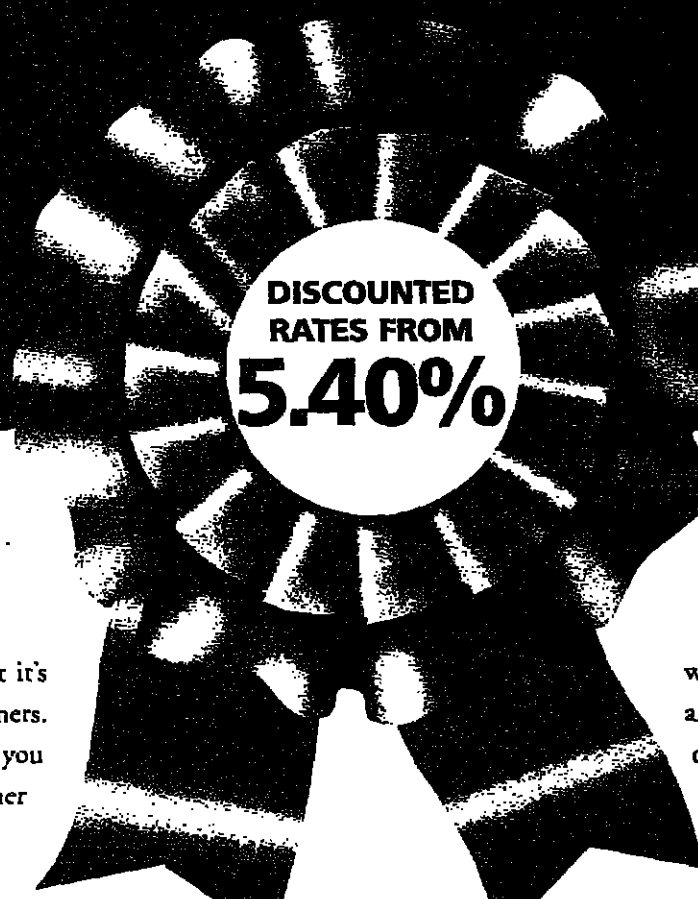
Ministers have strongly denied that the donation influenced their decision last year to exempt Formula 1 from the ban on tobacco advertising. However, on Lord Neill's advice, they handed back the money when the payment became public.

Andrew Puddhephatt, director of Charter 88, told the committee that there should be spending limits at elections, and there should also be direct state aid for parties.



In the program: Eddie Matthews, aged 59 and for 42 years a lighthouse keeper, passing the Lizard light in Cornwall to computer control. Lizard was the last light in the South-west to be automated; there are only three staffed beacons in Britain. Photograph: Sam Morgan Moore

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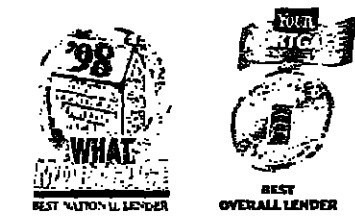
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Lord Irvine aide to quit

By Fran Abrams

A SENIOR aide to Lord Irvine is to leave his office and seek work in the private sector, it was announced last night.

Sheila Thompson, head of information in the Lord Chancellor's Department, has been in her post for seven and a half years and has worked closely with Lord Irvine's predecessor, Lord Mackay of Clashfern.

She is the latest in a series of senior press officers to leave the Government Information Service since the general election. Jonathan Haslam, former press secretary to John Major, left the Department for Education and Employment last October to take up a job in the City. Jean Caines, head of information at the Department of Trade and Industry, took early retirement. The heads of information at the Northern Ireland and Scottish offices, the Ministry of Defence, the Department of Social Security and the Treasury have also left.

Whitehall sources said last night that Ms Thompson, a highly-regarded civil servant, had been expected by her new boss to fend off bad publicity in the manner of a political special adviser.

Before the announcement was made it had already become known that Allan Percival, deputy press secretary at No 10, was to move to Lord Irvine's department in an attempt to boost his popularity. He is to be given a newly-created post, Director of Communications.

The Lord Chancellor has been at the centre of bad publicity about the £650,000 refurbishment of his official apartments in the House of Lords, his views on privacy rules and his comparison of himself with Henry VIII's all-powerful Lord Chancellor, Lord Wolsey.

"After seven-and-a-half years at the Lord Chancellor's Department, it's time for a change," said Ms Thompson, who is 47.

"When I arrived at the Lord Chancellor's Department the criminal justice system was completely new territory for me. I set out to make it more clearly understood and the workings of the judges more clearly understood. I wish Allan Percival every success in the new expanded role."

Ms Thompson broke new ground by encouraging the judiciary to help explain their more controversial rulings through the media.

Blair's Middle East tour avoids conflict

By Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

THE lesson of the Northern Ireland peace process was that even the most intractable problems could be solved, the Prime Minister's official spokesman said yesterday, on the eve of Tony Blair's four-day visit to the Middle East.

The tour has been stripped of all potential controversy, with no overnight stay in Gaza, and no visit to East Jerusalem, but Mr Blair's spokesman was scornful about the "ill-informed comment" about the arrangements for the visit.

He said there had been no question of any pressure from the Israelis, but it would appear that Mr Blair is not going out of his way to seek the conflict and controversy stirred by the visit of Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, last month.

The spokesman said that the programme had been de-

signed to be as balanced as possible between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

The whistle-stop tour by Mr Blair and his wife, Cherie, starts with a flight to Egypt today, on to Saudi Arabia tomorrow, Jordan and then Israel on Sunday.

Mr Blair's spokesman said the lesson of the Northern Ireland agreement was that leaders had to keep faith, keep patient, and keep their eye on the ball. Mr Blair was not going to the region with any significant initiative. "This may sound British, but he will be trying his best," he added.

The spokesman also confirmed, for the first time officially, that Mr Blair would raise the question of the two British nurses, jailed for the murder of an Australian colleague, Yvonne Gilford, in 1996. There has been speculation that the visit could be used to announce an early release for Deborah Parry and Lucille McLaughlan.

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مكتبة الأحرار

Blunkett acts to halt school boycotts

By Ben Russell
Education Correspondent

DAVID BLUNKETT, Secretary of State for Education, offered an olive branch to teachers yesterday in an attempt to avert a summer of industrial strife in schools.

He offered emergency talks with union leaders next week to cut classroom red tape in time to stave off a boycott of school bureaucracy which threatens to disrupt thousands of schools from next month.

Mr Blunkett said he hoped his action would eliminate the need for industrial action by 400,000 teachers.

He told members of the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers in Scarborough he was willing to send guidance to all schools instructing heads how to cut out excess paperwork.

Nigel de Gruchy, NASUWT general secretary, said he hoped the move would avert the industrial action, which could mean teachers boycotting meetings and refusing to write lengthy reports. The proposed action threatens to disrupt the Government's plan to set literacy and numeracy targets for every school.

Mr Blunkett said he wanted "a common-sense solution to find the answers to a genuine problem". He added: "We will circulate to every school in the country what is not expected, what can be achieved and how we can work together. We need to be able to respond so that people do not need to produce a report every fortnight on how the targets are being achieved, so that we do not have people who find that in doing their job

they are excluded from being able to give the time to actually lift standards. We believe what we will achieve next week will run with the grain and will not evoke or need industrial action."

Both the National Union of Teachers and the NASUWT have voted for industrial action over workloads.

Mr de Gruchy said that the "devil lies in the detail". But he added that if government proposals met union demands the threat of action would be lifted.

Mr Blunkett also responded to increasing anger from teachers over violent and disruptive pupils. He said efforts to integrate children with physical disabilities or learning difficulties into mainstream schools would continue. But he said teachers would not be expected to cope with severely disturbed children.

He said: "Unacceptable behaviour is unacceptable behaviour, and it needs to be eliminated. We do not expect teachers to be social workers, we expect teachers to teach. We need to identify significant learning difficulties so that behaviour problems which arise out of failure to achieve can be dealt with."

He warned against problem pupils being unloaded on unpopular schools. "My fear is schools that are struggling to improve themselves, schools that have vacancies, schools that need the greatest help, are often the places that have children dumped on them."

Mr Blunkett also warned he would "come down as hard as nails" on parents who allowed their children to disrupt schools or abuse teachers themselves.

David Aaronovitch, page 17



Life of a megastar:
The three ages of
Dame Edna -
represented by Lucy
Hayden, Penelope
Woodman and the
Dame herself - in
the preview of *New
Edna: The Spectacle!*
at the Theatre Royal
Haymarket, in
London. The show
opens on 21 April

Photograph: Geraint
Lewis

TUC names bad bosses

By Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

THE TRADES Union Congress yesterday "named and shamed" 10 employers - from household names to small family firms - which are allegedly denying workers their rights.

Abandoning caution ahead of the publication of a White Paper on "Fairness at Work", the TUC published a list of companies at which it levels a range of allegations from a refusal to allow union officials on their premises to intimidation.

Unions say they will target the employers as soon as the Government's proposals for a law on union recognition emerge in the White Paper, due out within the next month.

At the top of the list in the TUC's "Fairness not Fear" dossier, is Co-Steel of Sharnbrook and one of its main contractors MultiServ. Co-Steel is accused of threatening employees and undermining health and safety. Management would only say yesterday: "We are one of the best companies for employee relations, not one of the worst."

Allied Domecq, which owns 4,000 pubs across Britain, al-

legedly imposed "disgraceful" conditions on managers who are only allowed up to three days' paid leave if a spouse dies.

The Midland Bank has been targeted, because of its withdrawal of union recognition for managers, and Kruger Tissues of Caernarfon was accused of dismissing an employee for taking too much time off following the death of his wife and baby.

Newsquest, a local newspaper owner, has derecognised the National Union of Journalists has been derecognised. The group said that 70 per cent of employees owned shares in the company.

Union rights have also been denied at Sebgn Bakery, part of the British Bakeries group. Another firm, Melting, a machine engineering company based near Leeds, denied there were serious health and safety concerns at the plant. Relyon Bedding of Wellington near Taunton, is accused of forcing employees to work harder for less money. More than half the workers at Sanders Coaches of Holt, Norfolk, were said to be members of the Transport and General Workers' Union, but recognition was refused.

CJD sufferers 'need more support'

A CONFERENCE on Creutzfeldt Jakob Disease yesterday heard repeated calls for more to be done to help sufferers and their families.

Experts said medical staff often did not know how to approach the degenerative illness.

Delays in diagnosis can add to the trauma and even after CJD is suspected many families struggle to get help from cash-strapped social services departments, the specialists told the conference.

The conference, at Warwick University, was organised by the CJD Support Network. It

has been working with social services chiefs to prepare national guidelines to ensure help is available.

"At the moment it depends on where you live," said conference organiser Clive Evers.

The network is also hoping to introduce guidelines for GPs later this year.

"There is a difficulty in diagnosis and this disease has got to be treated immediately," said Gill Turner, a support worker. "Assessment procedures can take three to six months and some of our patients are dead in that time."



There is a new 30p postage rate for 20g airmail letters to the whole of Europe. Inland tariffs, including the First Class postage of 26p for letters up to 60g remain unchanged. For more details, just pick up a leaflet from your local Post Office or call Royal Mail Customer Services on 0345 740 740.



Teething troubles end with a filling finale



STEPHEN GOODWIN
Everest Diary
Base Camp

THE blues and oranges of tents spread over the rubble heap of Base Camp looked almost homely as we descended from the Khumbu Icefall. After several hours winding beneath impending ice cliffs and treading warily over aluminium ladders bridging crevasses dropping all the way to Hades, the relief that you're through is considerable.

We have just returned from two nights at Camp One, which is situated above the Icefall at over 6,000m. If our Himalayan Kingdoms Expeditions' Ever-

est expedition goes to plan, we will make another acclimatisation trip in four or five days' time, this time to Camp Two at the head of the Western Cwm or perhaps higher, and then the summit bid in three or four weeks.

So that makes another four runs through the Icefall, one of the most dangerous stretches in climbing Everest from the Nepal side. Lord Hunt, leader of the first successful ascent, summed it up well when he wrote: "An Icefall is a frozen cascade of ice. The Khumbu Icefall is indeed a monster of the species."

Climbing through it - often clipped to fixed lines, for not many feet pass before you are stepping or jumping over some deep slit - one can become lost in awe at the beauty of the massive ice sculptures. But when suddenly you pass into cold shadow you look up and see a great blue bulge hanging at an



Step by step: Winding through the Khumbu Icefall, you see crevasses dropping all the way to Hades

on the 1921 British reconnaissance expedition. Cwm is a Welsh word for a high, dead-end valley. Mallory must have thought it was a cwm par excellence, with Everest on the north side. Lhotse, another 8,000m peak at its head, and Nuptse, just under the magic figure, on the south side. As we watched, small avalanches were constantly cascading from the slopes. In 1921 it was believed the Icefall was an insurmountable barrier.

However, for two members of our team - the stockbroker Rob Owen and our doctor Sundeep Dhillon - the day was to be more than one of mountain reverence. One of the more painful perils of high-altitude climbing is a bad tooth. A major side filling that Rob had had done in Japan was just not up to the Himalayas and popped out, leaving Sundeep with a challenge - only his third ever shot at dentistry, and at 6,000m in snow and with only a rudimentary kit.

Watched by the rest of us, Sundeep performed with aplomb, momentary doubts about whether the filler would set vanished after five minutes when it turned to rock, with Rob as relieved as if he had just survived another round with the Icefall.

impossible angle, you understand why the place has been a Sherpa widow-maker.

Despite the thin air you hurry on. I certainly hurried in places, and pulled hard on the jumars to climb a couple of ice

cliffs - a jumar is a device carried by every Everest climber; it will slide up a rope but not slip back. So by the time I reached the lip of the Icefall and began the walk to our tents at the opening to the Western

Cwm every step was a weary effort. How will I manage at higher altitude?

But even so my five hours from Base Camp was bettered in our team only by the superb Canadian, Byron Smith,

and familiarity will make it quicker next time.

Next morning we walked far enough into the Western Cwm to get a good view of Everest's awesome south-west face. For all the photographs I've seen of

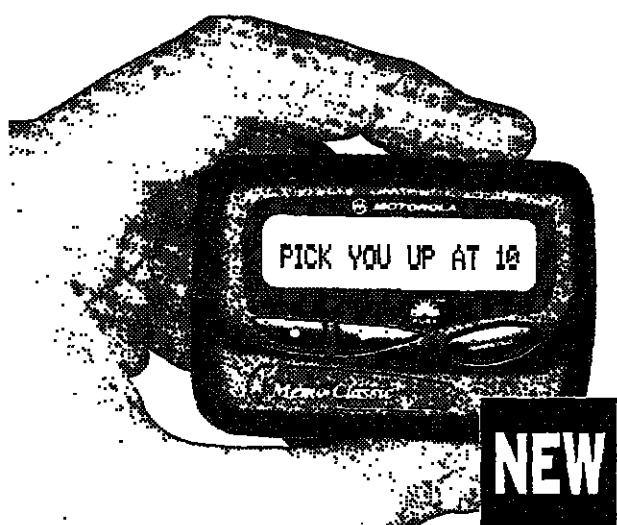
this aspect, first climbed in 1975 by a strong team under Chris Bonington, it was still a surprise to see so much stark dark rock and so little snow.

The cwm itself was named by the ill-fated George Mallory

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Model: Philips Alpha

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Model: Motorola Cello

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Blair ventures on the Net with No 10 web site

By Charles Arthur
Science and Technology Editor

TONY BLAIR yesterday announced the arrival of the information revolution, unveiling a web site on the Internet for No 10 Downing Street and insisting that "it is vital that Britain leads the way so that we can be Europe's pioneer in what is now known as the information age".

There was no evidence of irony from the man who admitted in an article for Rupert Murdoch's *Sun* newspaper that he wrote all his speeches in long-hand, and that his skills with a computer lagged behind his colleagues' because he "very rarely" used one.

Launching the web site on a visit to a library in Croydon, south London, he said it "highlights the tremendous potential of information technology for bridging the gap between government and the people".

Potential yes, but reality may be delayed. The site, at <http://www.number-10.gov.uk>, offers an object lesson in bad web page design. It is utterly reliant on graphics - so for the normal Internet user with a telephone connection it is much more time-consuming and expensive to read. More experienced designers always offer readers the chance to read pages in text form.

Nor was there any apparent embarrassment that it has taken almost four years for Britain's leader to catch up with the United States President (www.whitehouse.gov has been running since October 1994), nor at the fact that the Prime Minister's much-touted "cyberspace" will in fact lack even the spon-



Tony Blair launching the site

Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

taignty of Prime Ministers' Questions in Parliament, where members can ask follow-up questions.

Instead of responding interactively to questions posed on-line, Mr Blair will deal only with those sent in four days before the 29 April interview. Even those will first be vetted by Sir David Frost before being put to Mr Blair.

Sir David said he liked the idea of the first prime ministerial interview on the Net. "It will be a first for me as well. The public will be in sole charge of devising the questions, and I will be in sole charge of deciding which ones to put to the Prime Minister," he said.

At yesterday's launch, Mr Blair said that "it is vital that political leaders try to keep in touch with the people that elected them". However, that may be easier said than done. Yesterday attempts by *The Independent* to access the Downing Street site's "open

discussion" area ended in failure. The server appears to be not available.

Black people in the US are less than half as likely to have a computer or access to the Internet than white people, even after allowing for differences in income and education, according to a new scientific study published today.

Writing in *Science* magazine, Donna Hoffman and Tom Novak of Vanderbilt University said: "If a significant segment of our society is denied equal access to the Internet, US firms will lack the technological skills needed to remain competitive. Employment opportunities and income differences among whites and African Americans may be exacerbated, with further negative consequences to the nation's cities."

Their study found that while 73 percent of white students owned a home computer, only 32 percent of black students did.

Laptop computer deal puts teachers in information age

By Ben Russell
Education Correspondent

MORE than 9,000 teachers will have access to laptop computers under a £23m package announced yesterday by David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education.

The move is designed to put teachers - many of whom have been shown in surveys to know less about information technology than their pupils - in the "vanguard of the information age", according to Mr Blunkett.

"They need to be able to inspire young people and show that they too can use IT," he said. He added that he wanted teaching staff to become familiar with the latest multi-media technology.

He told the conference of the National Association of Schoolmasters' Union of Women Teachers in Scarborough that teachers should take advantage of lesson plans and other voluntary guidance which the government is making available on the Internet.

Mr Blunkett said some 4,000 schools would benefit from £257m in government cash plus another £250m as a result of public/private partnerships.

He said giving teachers portable computers "helps their confidence and their teaching and helps them to organise their work so as to use more effectively the time they spend with their pupils."

But Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the NASUWT, said: "We would rather have money in classroom teachers' pockets than sitting on head-teachers' laps."

Berlusconi loses his grin as power slips away

By Anne Hanley
in Rome

IT SHOULD have been a crowning moment. Four years after creating a mainstream political party from scratch in weeks, and leading that party to an election victory, Silvio Berlusconi climbed onto a stage-decked out in Forza Italia blue, the notes of the Forza Italia anthem dying away, to address his Forza Italia party.

"Our critics call Forza Italia the party that doesn't exist," said Mr Berlusconi. "Suddenly, and unequivocally, however, here we are. It exists, it keeps going, and it is growing."

But upbeat as the media tycoon-turned-politico was, nothing could hide the tension behind what is the first, and may be the last, national congress held by the political brainchild of one of Italy's most successful entrepreneurs.

"He's a loose cannon," said Forza Italia founding member Tiziana Parenti as she stormed out of the party one day before the congress. "It's a virtual party, a party of yes-men, a Kálfia-esque castle."

Ms Parenti, a former magistrate, is not the only key personality to have left Forza Italia over the past few weeks. Intellectuals and Euro-MPs, former generals and journalists have deserted what looks increasingly like a sinking ship, irked, not so much by Mr Berlusconi's high-handed managerial attitude as by his habit of making contradictory decisions in rapid succession.

The latest example was his reneging - in an interview in one of the many magazines he owns - on an all-party groundplan to introduce a French-style presidential republic in Italy. This

week he opted for a German system. Moreover, he mooted bringing back a proportional voting system to replace the first-past-the-post system which he has always championed.

To the congress, Mr Berlusconi explained that all he wanted to do was open the topic of reform up to debate, giving party members an opportunity to mull over alternatives - this after a parliamentary committee of which he was a vocal member spent two years deciding on the best recipe.

For the other parties which make up the centre-right Freedom Front coalition, also headed by Mr Berlusconi, the change of heart came as the latest in a series of blows struck by their unpredictable friend. When Gianfranco Fini, leader of the National Alliance party and Mr Berlusconi's closest political ally, walked into the Forza Italia congress yesterday, he was not smiling.

Since his triumphant entrance into politics in 1994, Mr Berlusconi's trademark grin has turned into a grimace. Gone are the days of the *milionario ridere*, the laughing billionaire, with his sweeping utopian visions of the kind so familiar to devotees of the afternoon soaps with which his three national television channels abound; at the beginning of his political adventure Mr Berlusconi had no qualms about promising to safeguard "a free society... where there is no fear, where generosity, dedication, solidarity and love of work take the place of social envy and class hatred".

Above all, he pinpointed the former Communist Party - now the leading element in the Prime Minister Romano Prodi's coalition government - as his, and Italy's, worst enemy. A

deadly threat to free enterprise. The market economy had allowed Mr Berlusconi to accumulate a television empire, the country's largest publishing house, a huge construction firm and the AC Milan football team. Left-wingers in power, he implied, would prevent other honest, hard-working Italians from reaching these heights.

A public exhausted by corruption enquiries and generations of dodgy politicians lapped it up. Berlusconi had not yet had a chance to display his own political ineptitude.

Through an ill-fated seven-month period in government in 1994, and a hard-knocks experience in opposition since, Mr Berlusconi has lowered his sights. Keeping the Reds in check remains a driving ambition - long after Italy's Communist Party threw off its last vestiges of Marxism. But keeping himself out of the law courts is also a priority, as is clinging on by his fingernails to his hold over the opposition leadership.

He may, however, be shoot-

ing himself in the foot in his rush to achieve them. By evoking a return to a proportional system, Mr Berlusconi was pandering to the Northern League, the devolution-seeking party which was briefly allied with Forza Italia but only long enough to knock the Berlusconi government out of power in December 1994 in an unedifying display of power-play.

Mr Berlusconi's memory for such humiliations is obviously short. Not so Mr Fini's. Moreover, Mr Fini is not budging from his demands in the constitutional reform field. And these include a French-style presidential system.

If Mr Berlusconi hopes the Northern League's visceral loathing of the Milan magistrates who are digging into the shadier side of his business interests will ensure he retains his parliamentary immunity he is mistaken. By dealing a death blow to his crumbling opposition, he may find himself out of the political world altogether, and well within reach of the law.

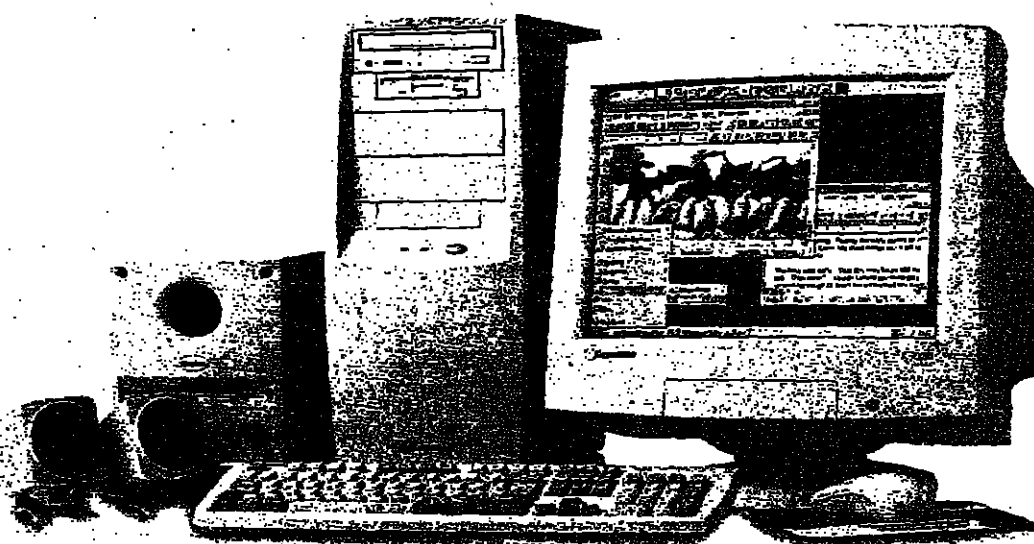


One hit wonder: Berlusconi is showing the strain as Forza Italia hits the ropes

Photograph: Andras Bankuti/Reuters

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737 jets to be rewired

TAKING a further step to improve air safety in the aftermath of the TWA jumbo jet crash off Long Island in 1996, authorities in America want all but the newest 737s flying in the US to be rewired. The 737 is the world's most popular commercial airliner. The order, issued by the Federal Aviation Authority, would affect 1,140 aircraft in the US. Similar instructions could follow for European carriers. A week ago the National Safety Transport Board issued a non-binding recommendation for rewiring programmes that could apply to all kinds of Boeing jets and even Airbus models. Carriers and Boeing have 40 days to comment. Airlines would have one year to comply.

— David Osborne, New York

Drug lords profit from Cup

INTERNATIONAL drug cartels plan to flood Western Europe with narcotics this summer to cash in on the influx of football fans for the World Cup competition in France, a senior UN official said. Pino Arlacchi, executive director of the UN's drug control programme said yesterday that drug cartels were co-operating to exploit market opportunities. "For example... Colombia's drug cartels are linking up with the Russian Mafia to take advantage of the influx of people in Europe for soccer's World Cup," he said. — AP, Washington

Sick cartoon back on TV



"POKEMON", the cartoon taken off the air after hundreds watching it became ill, was back yesterday in a toned-down version. On 16 December at least 700 viewers - mostly children - were rushed to hospitals with symptoms ranging from nausea to convulsions. An inquiry discovered that one scene, in which the screen shifted in ultra-rapid succession between bright red and blue, was to blame.

— AP, Tokyo

Mass grave exhumed

FORENSIC experts unearthed 19 bodies from graves in an eastern enclave formerly held by rebel Serbs, a government official for missing persons said. The bodies were dug up from a site alongside a Catholic graveyard in Beli Manastir, on the north-eastern tip of the border with Hungary. — AP, Zagreb

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Paula Jones set to appeal sex-case ruling

By Mary Dejevsky
in Washington

PAULA JONES was expected to break two weeks' silence yesterday to announce that she was pursuing her sexual harassment case against President Bill Clinton to appeal, in spite of pessimistic legal assessments of her chances. Her appeal will be backed by the right-wing Rutherford Institute, which funded her original case.

Ms Jones's civil lawsuit against Mr Clinton was dismissed on 1 April by an Arkansas judge who ruled that she had no case against the President, even if her accusations were true. According to Ms Jones, Mr Clinton had invited her to a hotel room, dropped his trousers and asked her to perform oral sex: she refused.

After lengthy pre-trial hearings, Judge Susan Webber Wright decided Mr Clinton's alleged behaviour,

while "boorish and offensive", was not sufficient to support a claim for sexual harassment and that Ms Jones had suffered no psychological or professional damage. Mr Clinton was governor of Arkansas at the time of the alleged incident eight years ago and she was a state employee.

Ms Jones was said to have been shocked and distraught by the dismissal of the case, which had been

due to come to court on 27 May. Among the factors believed to have been considered by Ms Jones and her legal team were the record of the court circuit that would hear an appeal (the eighth circuit, based in St Louis), and the political impression that would be created if she abandoned her case. Mr Clinton's supporters have argued that her motive in bringing the case was largely political and that she was being used

by right-wingers who wanted to discredit a Democratic president.

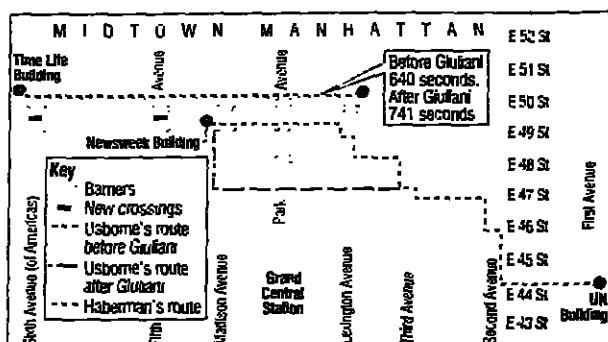
Ms Jones's lawyers are expected to argue that many of the facts that emerged during the pre-trial investigation were disputed and, as such, should have been presented to a jury rather than being dismissed outright by the judge. Ms Webber Wright's ruling, however, was widely praised in legal circles for its clarity and incisiveness, and the odds on its being overturned were judged slim.

Even if Ms Jones is granted leave to appeal the case will not have the political drama of the original lawsuit. It will focus on legal technicalities, and proceedings could drag on beyond the end of Mr Clinton's presidency two and a half years hence.

Meanwhile in Washington, the independent prosecutor, Kenneth Starr, who is investigating charges of criminal wrongdoing by Mr Clinton

in relation to the Whitewater land deal in Arkansas and an alleged relationship with the White House trainee, Monica Lewinsky, says he will not take up a position at Pepperdine University in California. The job offer had exposed Mr Starr to accusations of political bias because the university's chief benefactor, Richard Scaife, is a fierce critic of President Clinton and has made donations to anti-Clinton projects.

How the mayor made me cross in Manhattan



IGIVE up. For months I have been doing my damndest to get arrested for jay-walking outside my office. If not arrested and thrown into solitary, then at least fined. Even a harsh ticking off would have worked. My reasoning was simple: suffer terrible punishment for crossing Madison Avenue at the wrong moment and at the wrong place and then explode with indignation in this diary.

It was just before Christmas, when our brilliant (some say crazed) mayor, Rudolph Giuliani, started messing about with one of the great delights of Manhattan: its walkability. Compared with almost any other American metropolis this seething island is a pedestrian paradise. A lunch appointment 20 blocks away? Give yourself time - at a speedy

NEW YORK DIARY



David Usborne

pace, say a block a minute - and walk it. If you do not like the immediate scenery, look at the people.

Here is an important thing to understand about walking from A to B in Manhattan, where the avenues (running north-south) and streets (west-east) are mostly laid out on a grid system. Or rather, it is not



Lingering ice: Skaters at the Rockefeller Center prove it is still winter in New York

Photograph: Charles Knight/Rex Features

important at all, but a pet fixation of mine. Your journey will be far more efficient, if it can be zig-zagged. If B is a straight shot from A - let us say they are both on Madison - you will be impeded repeatedly by traffic moving on the cross-streets. But if reaching B requires some rights and lefts, you are in much better shape. The

name of the game is to see if you can complete the journey without having to stop for cars at all.

Over the months I have perfected this, walking from the United Nations on 1st Avenue and 44th St to this office on 49th and Madison. Essentially this is an east-to-west journey. But I also have a five-

block south-north margin to play with. Rather than wait to cross an avenue if the traffic is moving, I can skitter north a block or two until the avenue traffic is halted. And cross.

Then along came Mr Giuliani and his clever plan to ease gridlock at the peak of Christmas shopping. Erect steel barriers at the busiest midtown

intersections, he decreed, and force pedestrians to cross them on one side only. The other side would be pedestrian-free, to allow traffic turning into the avenues to flow more freely.

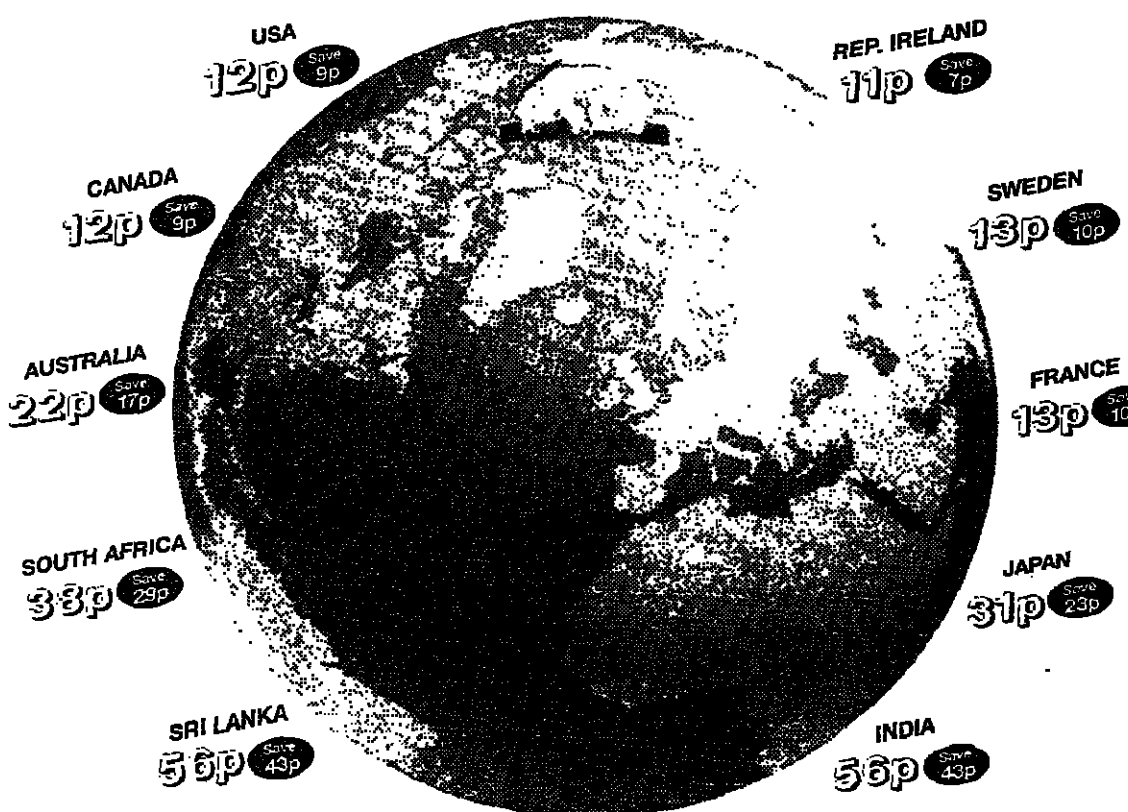
Just an experiment, he said. The barriers would be gone in the New Year. Now, in mid-April, they are still

there and mostly, it seems, in the immediate vicinity of this office. And at every barrier stands a policeman watching for jaywalkers and stropky reporters wanting to get arrested like me. Anyway, my whole system for zig-zag, non-stop foot-travel in New York is, needless to say, in tatters.

NOW I find vindication in Cyde Haberman's regular NYC column in today's Metro Section of the New York Times. Just look at this: Some "expert", who is possibly even more barmy than I, has ascertained that thanks to the barriers and, if you please, two new pedestrian crossings instituted by the mayor in the middle of the 49-50th St blocks on Fifth Avenue and Sixth - yes, the middle - it now takes 101 seconds longer to make a journey from the north-west corner of 50th and Sixth to the north-east corner of 50th and Lexington. That is 741 seconds compared with 640 seconds - or 16 per cent longer. And for what? If the car drivers are happier I have not exactly heard them tooting their horns for Rudy.

If you are still trying to digest the notion of pedestrian crossings mid-block, you are not alone. This is not just not meant to be in Manhattan. As Mr Haberman notes: "The face of some of Manhattan's most famous intersections - a part of town that is New York to much of the world - has now been dramatically altered." I was forced onto the 5th Ave mid-blocker on my way yesterday to the Rockefeller Center. I had one mission. Had winter indeed ended in New York and could summer formally be declared begun? The answer is no, at least not until this Sunday. That is when the Rockefeller Ice Rink, with the gilded statue of Prometheus watching over it, will at last close for the season. From then until next October, the rink will be home to cafe tables, umbrellas and palms in huge garden boxes. And summer really will be here.

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Japanese village waits nervously for Yeltsin

By Richard Lloyd Parry
in Tokyo

THERE is a word in Japanese for the atmosphere surrounding Boris Yeltsin's visit to Japan this weekend, and the man from the tourist association in Kawana, the tiny seaside village where the president will be staying, leaves no doubt what it is. *Meiwaku*, *meiwaku*, *meiwaku!* he says. "I want to shout it out loud! We locals are sick and tired of this - why couldn't they have their meeting in Tokyo?"

Meiwaku means nuisance, bother, irritation and inconvenience. In a society which values order and predictability above all things, creating a *meiwaku* is one of the worst things you can do.

To Ryutaro Hashimoto, the Japanese Prime Minister, Mr Yeltsin's visit is something of a coup, a chance to defrost a relationship which has been on ice since the end of the Second World War. Despite being near neighbours, the two countries have no peace treaty and little trade as a result of a lingering dispute over the Kuriles, a chain of desolate islands seized by Stalin at the end of the war.

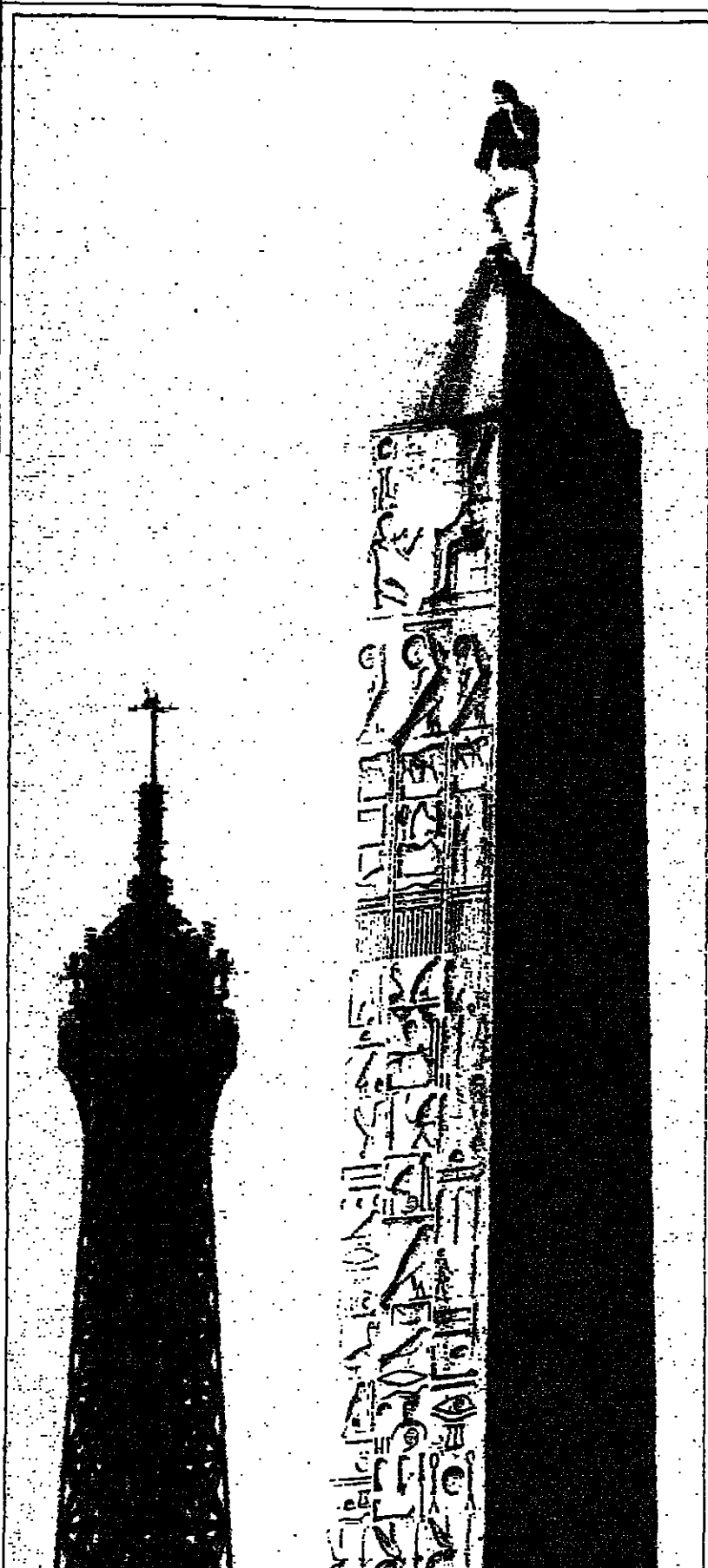
But to everyone else, the Russian visit is a source of bafflement, anxiety and trepidation. With his abrupt changes of mind, uncertain health and volatile domestic situation, Mr Yeltsin is as un-Japanese and *meiwaku*-laden as it is possible to imagine. Prominent among the anxieties is Mr Yeltsin's health. A distinguished Japanese heart surgeon has been put on stand-by in case the volcanic springs in which Mr Yeltsin and Mr Hashimoto are hoping to take a dip prove too much for his much-mended heart. But there is an even more basic concern: will the notoriously unreliable Mr Yeltsin turn up? It is almost certain now that he will, though memories are fresh of

the occasions in 1992 and 1993 when two presidential visits were cancelled after disagreement over the Kuriles. This time, thanks to the efforts of Mr Hashimoto, the atmosphere is warmer, although there was a panic last week when some confusing signals started coming out of Moscow. Bugged down in the Duma, which was stubbornly rejecting his choice of prime minister, Sergei Kiriyenko, Mr Yeltsin postponed his visit to this Saturday and Sunday.

If thoroughness is the great strength of Japanese officialdom, inflexibility is its weakness. The proposed venue - the Kawana Hotel, south-west of Tokyo, where Marilyn Monroe honeymooned with Joe DiMaggio - had turned away guests for the duration of the original visit. Suddenly, it had to cancel 600 reservations made for this weekend. Of three weddings, one could not be postponed - bride and groom will pass through metal detectors as they arrive to be married.

The 10 cherry trees specially transplanted for the delight of Mr Yeltsin's wife have, in the past few days, shed their famous blossoms. The rooms prepared for visiting journalists in the smaller hotels sit empty during one of the busiest weeks of the month. "We were turning down other guests and welcoming the media - now they refuse to pay their cancellation fee," says one irate hotelier. "There are traffic jams because of all the restrictions on cars. It doesn't matter who Yeltsin is, it won't do our village any good."

The poor traffic flow will help in one respect. As the robbers of the Kuriles, Russians are the special enemies of Japan's small but noisy right wing, who drive constantly around Tokyo blaring anti-communist slogans. Kawana has the advantage of narrow and restricted access by road. It should be enough to deter all but the most determined nationalists.



Spiderman: Alain Robert makes a mobile phone call after climbing to the top of the 23 metre high Luxor obelisk in the Place de la Concorde, Paris yesterday. He was later arrested for the stunt. Photograph: Michel Euler/AP

Court shown Botha's apartheid era hit-list

By Mary Braid
in Johannesburg

A HIT-LIST of enemies of the apartheid state drawn up by PW Botha's State Security Council was presented to a South African court yesterday by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as part of its case for subpoenaing the former president.

Appearing before a black judge in the courtroom at George, on the south-east coast, Mr Botha, 82, the former custodian of apartheid, who is charged with defying an order to appear before the TRC, is no doubt well aware that South Africa has changed. But the list, drawn up in 1986, was another reminder.

Many of those he targeted for surveillance and detention - including former Archbishop Desmond Tutu, now chairman of the TRC, Arthur Chaskalson, president of the Constitutional Court, Sidney Mufamadi, safety and security minister, and Dullah Omar, the justice minister - now run the country.

Paul van Zyl, the commission's executive secretary, presented the list as evidence that Mr Botha's State Security Council (SSC) sanctioned killings and torture. The presentation followed the failure of the TRC's bid earlier this week to avert a racially divisive trial of the elderly Afrikaner leader.

Mr van Zyl read old state documents ordering the "identification and elimination of revolutionary leaders and particularly those with charisma" and the "physical destruction" of revolutionaries, inside and outside the country.

The TRC wants to discuss the documents with Mr Botha as part of its bid to trace responsibility for apartheid-era atrocities. Witnesses have told the TRC that Mr Botha sanctioned violence, although the former president has denied he was an "Afrikaner and Christian" would do so.

At the height of Mr Botha's rule, 30,000 opponents of apartheid were jailed without charge and 20,000 people were killed in political violence, according to human rights organisations.

In a submission to the TRC last year, Mr Botha's successor as president, FW de Klerk, claimed that while the ruling National Party might have created the conditions which allowed human rights violations to take place it never sanctioned them.

It is a position many refuse to accept: including former high-ranking policemen and military personnel who have claimed they took their orders from the very top.

Mr Botha is contesting the TRC's right to subpoena him. Attempts to find an out of court settlement delayed the beginning of his trial and led to a postponement of the criminal case yesterday.

The former president said in a statement that he found the delay unacceptable. Earlier he had turned angrily to his lawyers and said: "This case was set down for four days. Come let's go on." But the court agreed to a postponement. The case will resume on 1 June.

UN to pull out of Congo

By David Osborne
in New York

AMIDST clear anger at the government of Laurent Kabila, the United Nations is preparing to withdraw a human rights mission from the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) even though its investigation into alleged massacres of Hutu refugees from neighbouring Rwanda is incomplete.

While a final decision may not be taken until the weekend, the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, indicated yesterday that the team in Congo would be coming home. "We have done the maximum and tried to go the extra mile," he said. "The search for the truth will go on by other means."

Dispatched last August, the UN team was investigating claims that large numbers of

Rwandan Hutu refugees were slaughtered in the east of the country during the early stages of Mr Kabila's march to power in 1996 and 1997. He toppled the dictator of the former Zaire, Mobutu Sese Seko, last May. The suspicion is that the massacres were encouraged by Rwanda's Tutsi-led government, which feared that the Hutus - blamed for slaughtering up to a million Tutsis in Rwanda - would return home.

The 25-strong team, however, has received scant co-operation from the Kabila government and constant harassment on the ground. Last week, a Canadian member of the group was detained overnight. Mary Robinson, the UN high commissioner for human rights, denounced the action as a "flagrant breach" of Kinshasa's obligation.

The UN decision is likely to deepen the international isolation of the Kabila government which had been hoping for an influx of aid after Mobutu's removal. But as fears have gathered that his government may turn out to be as repressive as the last, promises of aid have not materialised.

"This will underscore how difficult it is to get to the facts and how difficult it is to get governments to cooperate when human rights abuses are at stake," Mr Annan commented.

The Secretary General is expected to ask a Chilean human rights lawyer, Roberto Garretón, to continue the investigation in neighbouring countries. Mr Garretón was chosen last year to head a first mission, but was asked to step down by Mr Annan when Mr Kabila objected.

Russia plans to build world's largest passenger airliner

By Phil Reeves
in Moscow

RUSSIAN aircraft designers say they are planning a gigantic super-jumbo jet which would be capable of carrying as many as 1,000 people - making it the largest passenger airliner in the world.

Sukhoi, which is renowned for its fighter jets, is seeking investors for the project in the hope of exploiting a sharp rise in demand forecast for large long-haul jets over the next few decades.

The vast aircraft, the KR-860 - otherwise known as "The Wings of Russia" - is intended to challenge the A3XX super-jumbo being developed by Airbus Industrie, a four-nation European consortium which includes Britain. The latter, a four-engine double-decker affair, will initially carry 570 passengers in three classes, with a range of 7,500-8,500 miles. It is due off the blocks in 2003.



Mass flight: Boeing's 747-400, currently the world's largest airliner. The new jet would carry twice as many people

In terms of size alone, the Russian project is highly ambitious. It would carry nearly double the number of passengers as the Boeing 747 - the aircraft that has for decades dominated the jumbo market - and have more than twice the 440 seats in an Airbus A330. "We understand that developing such a plane requires substantial sums of money and we are trying to get it from

Russian investors," Gennady Yanpolsky, Sukhoi's deputy chief designer told Reuters.

It is also understood that Western investors are being canvassed. Until recently, Sukhoi was primarily known for its military aircraft but last month it registered a commercial aviation consortium in Kazan, capital of the republic of Tatarstan in Russia.

Some industry estimates

place demand for jets of 550 seats or more at around 500 over the next 20 years, chiefly because of the shortage of landing slots at major hubs such as London and New York - a problem which would be solved by fewer but bigger aircraft. However, Airbus believes the orders will be higher than this. ■ Russia's acting prime minister, Sergei Kiriyenko, approved terms on Wednesday for financing a new inter-continental ballistic missile and promised to keep up funding for the defence industry.

Mr Kiriyenko, who is fighting for parliamentary approval for his nomination as prime minister, said he had accepted a monthly schedule for financing production of the Topol-M single-warhead missile. The missile is expected to be part of Russia's Strategic Nuclear Forces, thought to be in better shape than most of the underfunded armed forces.

Americans run from the competition

AMERICANS are good sports. But when it comes to long-distance running, the normal sense of fair play seems to be fraying. Too many Kenyans are winning races in the United States and steps are being taken to stop them, writes David Usborne in New York.

Thus when competitors gather in Boulder, Colorado, next month for one of America's premier distance meets, only three Kenyans will be allowed to enter. Otherwise, say the race's organisers and

its corporate sponsors, Kenya will sweep away the US competition.

Last year, at the Boulder race, called Boulder Boulder, six of the first eight places were taken by Kenyans. In 1996, Kenyans accounted for eight of the first 10 finishers.

Not only will the number of Kenyan entrants be limited this year, but there will also be a skewed distribution of the \$32,000 (£19,000) in prize money. Any American who finishes in the top five will earn double the normal cash.

Is this unfair and racist? Maybe. But the folks in Boulder are unmoved. Race director Bill Reef told the *New York Times*: "It's our country, our event, our money. American sponsors want American winners, or at least Americans among the top finishers."

Craig Mosbach of USA Track & Field, the sport's governing body, said: "We're not limiting opportunities for foreigners but creating opportunities for Americans."

ON WEDNESDAY IT WAS THEM.

Draw date: 15/4/98. The winning numbers: 1, 12, 18, 26, 29, 36. Bonus number: 2.
Total Sales: £28,806,043. Prize Fund: £12,872,719 (45% of ticket sales).

CATEGORY	NO. OF WINNERS	AMOUNT FOR EACH WINNER	TOTAL EACH TIER
Match 6 (Jackpot)	3	£1,235,804	£4,006,212
Match 5 plus bonus ball	5	£246,573	£1,232,365
Match 5	505	£1,625	£1,770,125
Match 4	27,559	£81	£1,681,099
Match 3	516,731	£10	£5,167,310
TOTALS	544,803		£12,858,211

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Turning the killers loose

The peace agreement in Ulster has paved the way for the release of convicted bombers and gunmen. Not everyone is celebrating.

Nicole Veash reports

HOW would you feel if your daughter was murdered and her killer released in a political deal?

That is what the Travers family is having to face in the wake of the peace settlement brokered in Northern Ireland. The Good Friday agreement paved the way for 440 criminals - including bombers and gunmen jailed for multiple killings - to be released in the next two years in a political amnesty.

Hardliners in the IRA, and unionist paramilitary organisations like the UVF and UDA, have long seen murders and maimings as legitimate acts of war in their armed struggle. They argue that criminal sentences are inappropriate and say those behind bars should be seen as political prisoners, distinct from other criminals.

Sinn Féin's pressure group Saoirse, or Freedom, has long campaigned for the release of the prisoners. Gerry Adams always wears the group's discreet green ribbon, a constant reminder that for the republicans, releasing prisoners has always been a part of their peace deal strategy. In a move widely interpreted as a "goodwill" gesture to the republican movement, the Irish government released nine IRA prisoners on Tuesday, including a terrorist supposed to stay in jail until 2005.

Voices, particularly those of senior RUC officers, have already been raised in protest against the decision. But those for whom the decision is most painful are the families whose fathers, mothers, sons and daughters have been killed during the years of the Troubles.

Among them is Tom Travers. For 14 years he has remained silent about the death of his daughter Mary, a 23-year-old Catholic teacher, shot dead by IRA assassins after Sunday mass. For the first time, this quiet, retiring man has decided to speak about the tragedy which has blighted his life, because he can't live with the knowledge that killers will soon be walking the streets of Belfast.

"There has never been a day gone by when I have not thought about Mary," he says. "Her death was my fault. I have to take responsibility for that and live with the guilt which has never gone away. Time does not heal. The pain is still fresh inside of me."

"That's why I have to speak out now. The Government has singled out the person who murdered Mary for special treatment. They are saying it was a political act and not an act of murder. But it has to be murder because she was shot in cold blood."

Mary was shot at point-blank range when she was with her father. As a magistrate, Tom Travers was deemed a legitimate IRA target, although he was a Roman Catholic who grew up in the same working-class community as his daughter's killers.

Mr Travers, who was pumped with six



bullets which put him in intensive care and have left him in constant pain, survived the attack. "The doctors thought I wouldn't make it," he says quietly. "The plan was to hold off Mary's funeral, so I could be buried along side her."

It was a sunny April morning in 1984 when the Travers family left St Brigid's Roman Catholic Church after the noon mass. It was a matter of walking 200 yards back to their home and they thought little of it. Not that they were reckless; many people in Northern Ireland have lived under the threat of death. They know how hard it is to constantly vary movements and be on the look-out, but they understand how even the smallest of mistakes can cost lives.

Although he never had any special security arrangements, Tom Travers was always a careful man. He would never go shopping in the nearby town centre and would try to vary day-to-day movements as much as possible.

"I felt really happy that morning and we were all very much in love," says Mr Travers staring out of his living room window at the street lights flickering in the valley below. "Mary was in high spirits because she was to take her first primary school class to confession that afternoon. She was busy getting everything prepared and she wanted to go to the last mass of the morning."

"I was ready earlier, but I decided to wait for her and go together. And it was the fourth Sunday running that I had gone to mass at St Brigid's. I should have gone somewhere else. I was selfish really."

After mass Tom, Joan and Mary said their goodbyes to fellow parishioners at the church door and started their short walk home. "We were walking up the street when we heard a bang which sounded like a gun," says Mr Travers. "Mary saw this man cross the road and said in her beautiful, sweet voice 'That man has a gun'. Then he came towards us and pulled the trigger. I was shot six times from arm's length."

"I felt each individual bullet rip through my skin. I kept thinking while the next was my last? I thought, either I'm going to die or I'm going to spend the rest of my life as a cabbage. I lay in the dirty, dusty street, conscious the whole time, hoping they would shoot only me and not Joan or Mary. I didn't know I was lying there in Mary's blood."

While these thoughts were passing through Mr Travers' mind, Mary was lying dead on the ground; a bullet had torn through her aorta.

Many wondered how a girl who taught in the staunchly republican, Catholic An-



Mary Travers (top left). Her killer will be released under the peace agreement. Paramilitary gunmen (above) have ruined thousands of lives

dersontown area of west Belfast could have been so brutally killed by the IRA. When it admitted responsibility days later, they tried to justify the attack by claiming the bullet that killed Mary had passed through her father first. It hadn't.

In recent days, the grief of Mary's parents has intensified with news of the plan to release terrorists from jail. Even the word prisoner, a seemingly anodyne term for people who have killed, maimed and slaughtered in the name of a cause, sticks in Tom Travers' craw, particularly given his work as a magistrate. "They call them prisoners rather than criminals, yet the people I sentence for burglary are called criminals."

It took two years for two of the three people accused of Mary's murder to face trial. Only one, Mary Ann McArdle, was given a life sentence, the other was acquitted. The Travers family know McArdle would be released immediately under the proposed deal.

"The Government is hurting every single victim with this deal," says Mr Travers. "As a Christian I pray these people ask God for forgiveness, but they have never repented for their crimes. Every time politicians say we must remember the victims, I feel angry and depressed because they are just being hypocritical."

Only a few months ago, the reserved, 69-year-old, who has never spoken to anybody outside his immediate family about Mary, could not have mentioned her name

without crying. Now he is adamant that his own suffering should not be raised above others. "We are private people and we don't want to raise our grief above any other family's grief. We had our own Bloody Sunday, but many other people have suffered. And we don't want to lessen their loss. People touched by tragedy know that time can never heal. Many, many people are scarred in Northern Ireland."

Those who have lost relatives and friends in the years of Troubles are the

indignity is that the Government is telling us that our loved ones were not murdered and that the people who carried out these killings are as much victims as we are.

"We are being blackmailed into keeping quiet by not rocking the peace process. But I've had enough. I've kept quiet for 14 years, but enough is enough."

After his daughter's death, Mr Travers eventually returned to the bench as a local magistrate. He often faced paramilitaries across the courtroom, but always

without a police guard or an armoured car. We lost contact with all our friends because we couldn't meet them to socialise. We couldn't even join a victims' support group because we would be putting other people at risk. We don't have any freedom to live a normal life and we still live like hermits."

"I couldn't understand how I could be targeted by someone from my own religious community. They take away my right to have a normal life."

The Travers don't believe it is their place to absolve their daughter's murderers. They pray for the killers, but say only God can absolve. They are angry, not bitter. Angry that their daughter was another innocent victim of Ireland's Troubles.

"I have taken the murder of my daughter, the scattering of my family, the pain of the trial and the humiliation of a criminal injuries claim and I don't expect anyone to acknowledge me. But this is the final straw. I understand why paramilitaries want to release these people, but I can't take it from my own government. I'm being told to suffer so we can have peace. But this is one bridge that I just can't cross."

Tom and Joan Travers were given £309.75 to compensate for the loss of their daughter's life. They have never cashed that cheque. It remains in a desk drawer, fresh and pristine as the April morning their daughter lost her life.

'We had our own Bloody Sunday, but many other people suffered. People touched by tragedy know that time can never heal'

same people who long for peace. Many of them feel that if some good, some resolution can come out of the death and the grief then at least their husband, wife, brother, sister, son or daughter, will not have died in vain. But for Tom Travers that is such a high price to pay.

"For the first time in my life," he says, "I'm not going to vote. I long for peace because it will help my family get our lives back, but not at this price. The real

tried to divorce his personal tragedy from his professional life. But the last 14 years have been spent in fear. There have been further attempts on Mr Travers' life and all five of his remaining children left Belfast to escape the constant security pressure. But, unqualified to sit as an English magistrate, he has remained in Belfast.

"Mary's murder really shut down our lives," he says. "We couldn't go anywhere

Why are men hopeless? It's all in the mind

New research claims the development of our behaviour is mirrored in the animal kingdom, writes Jerome Burns

WHY do human males have such relatively big penises? Why do human females, almost uniquely among mammals, become infertile in middle age? Why are men, generally, more promiscuous than women? These are the sort of almost child-like questions that fascinate American writer and scientist Jared Diamond.

Such questions demand what are known as "ultimate causal explanations" - religion used to offer such answers along the lines of "because God made us that way" - but nowadays evolutionary biology is seen as a more useful source.

So in his book *Why is Sex Fun?* (Phoenix, £5.99) Diamond begins by looking at animal sexual behaviour as a way of uncovering why ours is so different.

One of the stars of his new book is the female spotted sandpiper who is as sexually predatory as the most randy alpha male primate. She will pursue the smaller males for miles, have sex and then ensure no female rivals mate with them. When the eggs are laid her role reversal is complete because the males incubate and guard the chicks, while she goes on another sexual spree.

Nature emerges in this sort of account as a blind banker, ensuring, through the ruthless operation of genes, that all behaviours are subject to the disciplines of "profit and loss", "return on investment" and "energy costs". Applying these principles to human sexual behaviour allows Diamond to answer some of his questions. The menopause, for instance, turns out to be a logical response to a number of "cruel facts".

"At first sight it's a real puzzle because it looks as though human females have evolved a physical trait that cuts down their chances of reproducing," he says. "But it makes perfect sense in light of certain unique human features, like the focus's large head that makes childbirth very dangerous and the long period that the child needs caring for." It turns out that it's a better bet to protect your existing investment in children than to risk dying, and so reducing their chances of survival.

But research into hunting performance of modern day hunter-gatherers by a woman anthropologist, Kristen Hawkes of the University of Utah, paints a different picture. "She found that hunting was actually a very inefficient way of food gathering," says Diamond. "The men often come back empty handed and when you averaged out their occasional big kills, they supplied less food than the women did by much less glamorous method of foraging for roots and berries near the camp."

Diamond heads this chapter describing this research. "What are men good for?" and concludes that the jury is still out on that one. Evolutionary psychology may not be able to provide definitive answers yet, but at least its theories are testable, unlike religious or psychoanalytical ones.

What does emerge is the built-in conflict of interests between males and females. "One way of summarising it," says

Diamond "is that a woman is better off being married to a provider but a man is not best off being a provider." So doesn't evolutionary theory provide an excuse for male philandering? Shouldn't we be trying to spread our genes?

"Evolution doesn't tell us anything about how people ought to behave. For instance, it's obvious that humans have developed with a tendency for murder and genocide. Among the hunter-gatherers I studied in New Guinea, the main cause of death was murder. But we have set up strong social systems to outlaw that sort of behaviour and do it very successfully."

That still leaves the matter of our large penises. It seems likely that it serves as some sort of signal of virility. But think about this: if the same quantity of tissue were instead devoted to extra cerebral cortex, that redesigned brainy man would gain a big advantage.

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Animation: Jared Diamond outlines his behavioural theory

Photographs: Nicola Kurcz

Dose Worth millions. The shirts that is

The cost of replica football kit can take the shirt off your back. Tim Hulse finds out how it happens

FOR months it's been the subject of fevered speculation. Journalists have done their best to reveal its secrets but without much success. Small boys have tossed and turned at night anticipating its arrival. And now, at the Match of the Day Live event at Birmingham's National Exhibition Centre, it was about to be revealed to the public gaze for the very first time.

The packed crowd of football fans around the catwalk waits expectantly and you can almost cut the atmosphere with a knife. And then suddenly, with no fanfare, there it is, on the backs of Andy Cole, Nicky Butt and Ole Gunnar Solskjaer. It's the new Manchester United home shirt! There's a deafening roar as the players walk sheepishly to the front of the catwalk so that we can appreciate this ground-breaking piece of sports apparel in all its glory.

For this is no ordinary football shirt. It boasts a revolutionary non-locking zip for

which the makers, Umbro, had to obtain special approval from the Football Association. And there's another first - the shirts will also be available in special "women's fits", one of which resembles a dress. The shirts go on sale on 19 May and look set to be the biggest-selling football shirts ever. This is not just a football shirt to cover the backs of a Premier League team. This is big business: part of a merchandising industry which is worth £200 million a year. It provides ready profits for the team, and similar riches for the sportswear industry.

Replica shirts are one of the largest sectors of the £1.6 billion sports and leisurewear market, which is expected to grow by 20 per cent before the millennium. Clubs are believed to earn at least £10 per shirt sold to dedicated fans, on top of retailers from the manufacturers. Top of the shirt league is Manchester United: last year the club achieved a record £27 million profits from merchandising, including sales of half a million strips under its deal with Umbro.

Current guidelines urge clubs not to change their kit more than once every two years, but revenue is maximised by their having several different home and away strips. Last year Manchester United issued a fourth strip for its players to wear in the Champions' League, with replicas costing £80 for an adult and £63 for children. Manchester's fans



Moneyspinners: Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, Nicky Butt and Andy Cole show off Manchester United's new strip at Match of the Day Live at Birmingham's NEC Photograph: NTI

have been especially devoted. In the last five years, the strip has changed 13 times.

Sportswear giants such as Adidas, Reebok and Nike, together with football specialists like Umbro, fight hard to get the juiciest slices of the pie. "Everyone wants the same thing," says Robin Money, of Adidas UK, which manufactures Newcastle United's kit. "We don't want hundreds of clubs, we just want the best ones."

And they're willing to pay higher and higher prices to get them. Back in 1992, when Nike signed a £4 million deal to supply Arsenal's kit, the news shocked the sportswear industry. "Silly money," people said. But if that was silly, then things were soon to become truly ridiculous as the bandwagon started to roll. Bigger deals quickly followed for both Rangers and Newcastle and within three years, Reebok had

put pen to paper to finalise a five-year deal with Liverpool said to be worth around £25 million. Shortly afterwards Umbro stumped up around £60m to continue their arrangement with Manchester United for another six years.

So just how silly has it got? "The prices are certainly getting very high," says Money, "and that's simply because it's a very competitive marketplace."

At a recent football business conference, Edward Freedman, the former Manchester United merchandising manager who is widely credited with helping to create football's commercial boom, warned that replica shirt sales are falling. Since the money paid out by sportswear companies is an advance against royalties on products sold, a dip in the market could leave some of them considerably over-stretched. Freedman's view is echoed by Richard Perks, senior

retail analyst at Verdict, a company specialising in retail trade surveys. "It's certainly our impression that the market's peaked," he says. "It was still growing last year, but I think it probably peaked around the year end."

However, the manufacturers disagree with these gloomy forecasts, maintaining that sales are traditionally fairly flat at this time of year, while Colin Russell, the replica buyer at JJB Sports, which has over 200 hundred stores nationwide selling replica kit, says the market is in fact booming.

"We're seeing growth, not a reduction in sales," he says. And the World Cup should certainly help. The new Brazil shirt was launched a couple of weeks ago and is selling "way beyond expectation", according to Russell.

Which will no doubt be good news for Nike, which recently paid a whopping £250

million for the rights to manufacture it for the next ten years.

Certainly it's in both the clubs' and the manufacturers' interests to keep the prices high, because a price war could begin to affect royalties. Bargain hunters usually find it hard to track down bargain-priced shirts although last week Safeway put a limited number of official England kits on sale at £10 less than the normal price. On this occasion Safeway managed to obtain the kits from a third party, rather than the makers, Umbro.

One recent special offer from JJB Sports put the current Liverpool home shirt on sale for just £12.99. The shirt is due to be changed next month and JJB Sports obtained the shirts from the makers, Reebok, in a clearance deal.

What was interesting about that particular special offer was the clue it gave to the actual cost price of replica shirts,

which retail at an unofficial standard price of £39.99 for a basic adult's short-sleeved shirt.

When I asked the normally voluble Edward Freedman if replica shirts only cost a fiver to make, he replied simply, "I'll leave you to do the research on that."

Which is what I did, by speaking to someone who until recently worked for one of the major manufacturers. He told me that the cost of making shirts depends to a certain extent on the amount of embroidery and printing involved, but "you could easily get a quote for about £7 for that type of product."

And who can blame them? As long as fans are willing to buy replica shirts, then the manufacturers will keep on churning them out. As Robin Money at Adidas points out, "It's a business. Clubs are there to make money and we're there to make money."

Where does the £35 cost of a replica shirt go?

Made in factory for £5	
Sold to sportswear company for £7.50	
Sold to retailer for £13.50	
Sold in the shop for £35	

What happens after the last dance is over?

Nicola Barranger finds help is at hand for ballet dancers who can't face a life away from the stage

FIVE years ago Stephen Wicks was at the peak of his career. As a principal of the Birmingham Royal Ballet, he'd had several roles choreographed especially for him. Today he is "retired" from ballet and well-established in his second career owning a flower shop with fellow ex-dancer, Mark Welford. Both realise now that when they went into business, it was not just the commercial world they were naive about. Like most dancers they were pretty naive about life outside dance as well.

Mark puts this late maturing down to the fact that the ballet company disliked anyone showing initiative. "You're treated like children all the time, being told what to do even after you're 30. I wouldn't have minded so much if people had listened to me some of the time. If you ever said something, you were slapped down from-

diately for being rude or you were just not listened to. That's why people mature less quickly. They don't have to do anything for themselves, they're not allowed to."

If dancers retire in their twenties, (often because of injury), the adjustment to life after dance can be especially hard. They may not have fulfilled themselves as a dancer nor, if their training has been particularly strict, matured completely as an individual. Angelica MacArthur admits now, that 23 was far too early for her to give up. "I felt that I needed another place in which to continue the growth within myself." Unlike most dancers, Angelica had developed other interests outside ballet. Psychology held a particular fascination and much of her choreographic work reflected abstract subjects. "One of the big disappointments for me when I entered the professional world was the people. I found the culture a superficial one."

In what Angelica now sees as a rash decision, she left her job with the Netherlands National Ballet at a time when choreographers were taking a keen interest in her beautiful tall frame. After leaving ballet, Angelica went back to college and although she is



now settled and a successful clinical psychologist with a particular emphasis on arts performers, she admits she has enormous regrets. "I had a tremendous period of grieving for what I had prematurely given up. It took a good 10 years for me to overcome that grief, that pain."

Her experience inspired her to offer other dancers counselling, something she would have appreciated when she was mourning the loss of her own dancing career.

"For about two or three years I turned my back on ballet. I couldn't bear to watch it, it was too acutely painful. Seven years later it really hit me that it had been like a death and I wasn't going to go back. It was

then that Angelica went into psycho-analysis to work through the depression.

Not all dancers suffer such intense bereavement. Much depends on the level at which the dancer leaves. Margaret Barbieri was one of the Royal Ballet's principal dancers in the mid-Seventies and was fortunate enough to continue performing until well into her forties. Giving up was not the problem, she says. Thinking about it gave her the most angst.

"I spent many nights crying about it and just not being able to come to terms with the fact that I was going to have to stop. It was the fear of the unknown."

Today Margaret Barbieri is



Mark Welford and Stephen Wicks (left) have made a successful transition from stage to floristry, but for other dancers the future is not so clear Photographs: Nicola Kurcz/David Rose

a director of ballet at the London Studio Centre and says she gets as much pleasure out of seeing her students develop and achieve their own success.

Until recently, there was no encouragement to think about life without dancing. Even today, many young dancers have to be forced to plan for their second career. Linda Yates is Executive Director of the Dance Companies Resettlement Fund and visits the ballet companies regularly to encourage the youngsters to think about the impossible. "I'm quite blunt about it. I say to the dancers - 'It is a fact, your career will come to an end in your early thirties'. There is the usual sort of denial, because if you love a career that much, you can't ever imagine it ending."

Five major British companies pay into the resettlement fund which gives grants to dancers "in transition" to a new career, helping people like Stephen Wicks and Mark Welford retrain in floristry. "When I first came to this job, resettlement for many dancers, equalled retirement equalled

death. I hope I've successfully turned that round into "resettlement equals positive future and career development. Building on what you know as a dancer and possibly using that knowledge and skills in another area."

What almost all dancers take to their new career is strict discipline. Many go on to university, for example, simply cannot understand the fuss fellow students might make about essay deadlines.

Linda Yates tries to convince dancers of their strong points. "They just don't have the life experiences, they haven't had any other identities or careers to fall back on. Once you have supported them during that phase of feeling under-confident they really succeed - they do exceptionally well. Dancers have an awful lot going for them. I think sometimes they just don't see it."

Nicola Barranger presents two 30 minute documentaries on BBC Radio 4 'Ballet Dancers never die... They just lose their Pointe' today and Friday 24th April at 11.00am

Listen to this man



The 1998 McCormick Lecture

Martin Sorrell is Group Chief Executive of WPP Group, which in 1997 generated a group annual turnover of £7.3bn. Under his leadership WPP has become the world's leading communications services group, employing 22,000 people, within 30 companies, in 90 countries.

In recent years the role of WPP Group has expanded from one of traditional holding company to value added parent company, adding distinct value to clients and even greater opportunities and rewards for its people. By adding value to the centre WPP believe they can demonstrate tangible results.

Martin Sorrell is also an enthusiastic supporter of The Association of MBAs and as a part of the McCormick Lecture series, will be giving a talk explaining how WPP is working to ensure that for them, the whole adds up to more than the sum of its parts. The talk will be held on April 20th, 1998.

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Vote out the rotten boroughs

NOW, here's a puzzle for the keen student of current affairs. Do you know who Richard Leese is? Or George Mickelwright? Or Frank McAvetty? No? Didn't think so. Well, they are, respectively, the leaders of Manchester, Bristol and Glasgow city councils. They should be as well known as say, Peter Lilley. Make that "better known". They're very important people because, local government for all the knocks it took under the Conservatives, still matters. It is not just about emptying the bins. Councils still have a significant role in educating our children, planning and protecting our environments, providing social services for our most vulnerable neighbours. Elections to them should be treated as more than a glorified public opinion poll or a playground for spin doctors to minimise expectations and maximise hype. For the next few weeks try not to listen to Tony Blair. Paddy Ashdown or William Hague. Ignore them. Use your local media, read the council candidates' election addresses. Councillors deserve to be assessed on their records and not those of their parties nationally. Too few of us bother.

On 7 May, millions of voters will turn out for elections to councils all over the country. Or rather many millions more will stay at home and give voting a miss. We are used to the idea that turnout in local elections is low, but a few months ago participation in the democratic process hit a new low.

In Melrose ward, Liverpool, just 687 souls could be bothered to drag themselves to the polling stations out of an electorate of just under 11,000 (a 6.3 per cent turnout). As Roy Castle might have said, it was a low-polling, poor-turnout, democratically insecure record-breaker. As a result, though, Labour lost its overall majority on Liverpool City Council. This should have been a major, hard-fought political event. But because people became inured to the idea that they can make no difference hardly anyone bothered to turn out. Who would?

There are plenty of places where extreme political domination has killed democracy. We have, in this country, one-party statelets in some of our town halls that might make the late Kim Il Sung blush. In Rotherham, in Newham and in Lincoln there are no opposition councillors. None. All Labour members. What do we suppose the debates are like? What is the quality of decision making? Where is the competitive urge? This is the kind of set-up that breeds complacency and worse. Some of the worst of the recent scandals have been associated with this kind of historical domination. Doncaster, still being investigated by the police, is but one example. Nowadays there are even Liberal Democrat administrations, like the one in Richmond in London, where the competition seems to have been eliminated.

The Prime Minister and his colleagues are aware of the problem and have produced a stream of ideas. Almost all their proposals are praiseworthy, even the notion of placing ballot boxes in supermarkets. Most of all we are delighted that, referendum permitting, there will be a directly elected mayor for London. We hope that this will be extended. We are also delighted that the Government will be giving London an assembly elected under a system of proportional representation to balance the power of the mayor. What we find puzzling, disappointing and inconsistent in the Government's proposals thus far is that it seems to have set itself against extending PR to other parts of the country. PR, other things being equal, brings with it a greater possibility of change, reduces the perception that a vote is "wasted", and tends to make for competitive politics.

Let's face it, the existing rotten boroughs are bad enough, but imagine what things would be like if the Government extended the idea of directly elected mayors without PR assemblies. No auditor on earth would be able to help some of the people who will have to live under a powerful mayor backed by a council chamber stuffed with members of his own party. The kind of balance we see in the London model should be good enough for us all. It may take some years to come. We don't think local democracy can wait that long. In the meantime, on 7 May, we should use the opportunities that we do have to start dismantling the one-party states. And, despite the temptation, do not cast a verdict on Blair's first year. Vote local.

Dunces in cyberspace

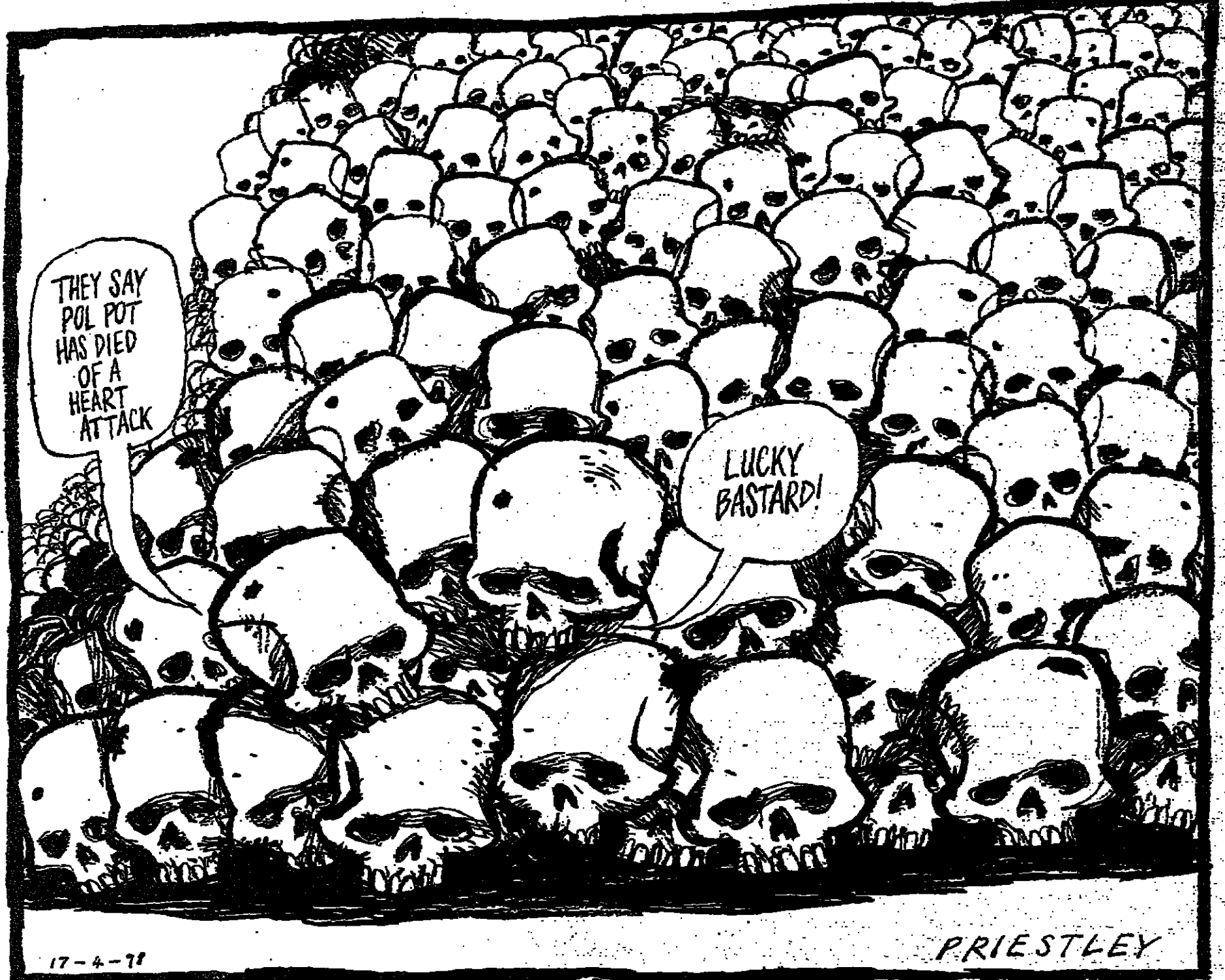
THE ODD THING about people who do not use computers is how often they overestimate the power of technology. There are the ignorant enthusiasts who think that computers are the answer to every problem. And there are the fearful technophobes, like the elderly women who reputedly will not use cash machines in case they inadvertently drain all the money from their accounts by pressing the wrong button. Both make the mistake of attributing mystical qualities to inert masses of chips and transistors.

The enthusiasts are the sort of people who think that, if only they had an electronic organiser, their lives would be organised, although the chief enthusiast, the Prime Minister, is too busy running the world - from a sofa, armed with a fountain pen and a telephone - to fill his head with icons. As he admitted yesterday: "I write my speeches in longhand and others type them up". Still, a photo-opportunity with a granny in a library browsing through the port - sorry, valuable public resources - on the Internet helps identify Tony Blair as a leader in touch with the future.

Genuine computer users, on the other hand, know well the frustrations of misnamed headlines and unintelligible error messages. They know that computers are stupid and fallible and can make simple tasks incredibly complicated. But they also know that we cannot do without them. To take one example at random, *The Independent* is totally dependent on computers and is several times more efficient than newspapers were using the old technology.

The Government's plans to equip schools with computers are not a panacea, but they are necessary. World leaders and old ladies may be able to get by without knowing their mouse from their e-mail, but children need to learn about computers, digital wars and all.

However, it is only when computers have become so mundane and boring that politicians do not bother to talk about them, that we will know we have really arrived in the Information Age.



Poisons on the farm

YOUR report "Hidden menace of nerve-gas poisons in sheep dip" (15 April) highlights the link between ME-like illness and exposure to organophosphates. I note that it has taken years of protracted struggle for this connection to be taken seriously.

The fact that not all farmers who use OP-based dips have developed illness clearly suggests that sensitivity to the poison is variable across the population. The probability must therefore exist that some people are vulnerable to the low-level but persistent contamination found in the environment.

Used sheep dips have regularly found their way into the nearest watercourse, whether by accident or recklessness. Resulting "low"-level contamination will therefore sometimes be much higher than we are led to believe. OPs also find their way into our bodies as spray residues, both on and inside "healthy" vegetables.

It is likely that meat also contains OP residues, as the drenching of cattle is intended to make their bodies poisonous to the warble fly. Now that the Somerset farmer Mark Purdy has finally found the ear of the stubbornly deaf establishment, we may find out officially what part these toxins played in the BSE epidemic.

So far as ME is concerned, some research has been done. One study found that sheep-dipper's illness and "typical" ME were clinically identical, suggesting that both entities share a common pathogenesis. (*Chronic Fatigue Syndrome as a Delayed Reaction to Chronic Low-dose Organophosphate Exposure*; Behan, 1996).

Perhaps it is time for the Government to fund some serious and committed research into the insidious poisoning of the population, since by current estimates there are 100,000 people with ME in this country and tinkering with the benefit system does not seem to have cured them. STEVE SMAILES, Warrminster, Wiltshire

I AM writing to pick up on the points in Joanna Wheatley's letter (8 April) about research into a possible link between organophosphates and BSE. The Ministry of Agriculture, Fish-

eries and Food have not yet agreed to finance any research in this area. We would however be prepared to consider research applications, from scientists who wish to work in this area, as part of our ongoing commitment to support research, including independent research, into BSE. Any application would be considered on its own merits in competition with other applications for financial support and could involve peer review.

Ms Wheatley's letter quite rightly points out a number of important issues in relation to the design of particular kinds of experiments in this area, although there are other approaches. We would expect any application to have thought through the need for proper controls in this as in any scientific experiment. Dr D W F SHANNON, Chief Scientist, Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, London SE1

Defence review

I WELCOME the acknowledgment by Dave Knight of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (Letters, 15 April) that the strategic Defence Review has been a truly strategic review of Britain's conventional force capability matched to the reality of international stability. I must, however, clarify the position on his other points.

First, I can assure Mr Knight that the review has indeed been foreign-policy led and that it has considered all aspects of defence policy, including our nuclear deterrent. The Government was elected on a manifesto commitment to retain Trident as a credible minimum deterrent and our work has naturally therefore started from that basis. We are, however, prepared to look afresh at all aspects of how this commitment should be implemented. I am confident that this fresh look at deter-

rence will be a key feature of the review's final conclusions.

Second, I reject entirely Mr Knight's assertion that we have been obstructive in our approach to nuclear arms control. Our manifesto commitment to multilateral negotiations to achieve mutual, balanced and verifiable reductions in nuclear weapons, with the goal of their global elimination, is very clear. With this in mind, we have now ratified the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (no other nuclear weapon state except France has yet done so), and we are looking at how to take our commitment further forward. We do, however, remain to be convinced that seeking a time-based framework for nuclear disarmament, as advocated by some in New York and Geneva, is a practical way to make progress. Dr JOHN REID, Minister of State for the Armed Forces, Ministry of Defence, London SW1

Church in turmoil

I AM one of very few "spare" priests in a deanery with several parishes "in vacancy". I spend a lot of time driving around a big area enabling congregations to receive the Blessed Sacrament, which they couldn't otherwise do, and I find them, without exception, welcoming and grateful.

I found it really hard to take that *The Independent* should see fit to publish the obscene, ugly and very hurtful paintings of Fr John Pelling, with his "loathing" for women priests (Back Page, 13 April). If "Forward in Faith" is prepared to receive money from such a source then it is an even more dubious body than I have always thought it. The Rev JUNE SIMPSON, Workshop, Nottinghamshire

GEORGE AUSTIN's disillusionment with the Church of England is clearly shared by many, as falling

C of E congregations show ("Austin gives 'too liberal' church one last chance", 13 April). The church's message seems increasingly to be, "You're all right. There are no real moral absolutes. Anything goes."

But people have consciences (however much they may wish they didn't) and an inbuilt knowledge that they are accountable for the way they live. So when the clergy constantly alter their stance to try to please people and draw them into the church, people recognise the hollowness and the hypocrisy - and they leave in droves.

Rather than celebrating human nature as it is, the church must return to addressing how far short we fall of being the men and women God intended us to be. Only then will people see the church as relevant. HUGH J THOMSON, Birmingham

Name these isles

TRIONA CAREY (letter, 14 April) questions whether the British Isles should be renamed.

In his book *The Third World War* General Sir John Hackett has written that in 1982-83 in talks between the British and Irish governments some form of association covering the British Isles was considered for "the Isles of the North Atlantic (for which the happy acronym IONA had already been coined)". What an excellent name for these islands. Col H T ROOKE, Woodstock, Oxfordshire

Chicken or egg

YOU QUOTE the agricultural manager of Tesco as saying: "There is absolutely no reason why any chicken or turkey should have to suffer during its life" ("Tesco to talk to its chickens", 13 April). Does this mean that Tesco are to stop selling battery eggs? VESNA JONES, London NW4

Sacked spooks

YOU SUGGEST that some staff working for the three Secret Services might have lost their jobs ("Cash cuts mean 007 gets his P45", 14 April). I hope that few of these staff that have been forced to leave, because they are very unlikely to have been allowed to complain to the Industrial Tribunal. The blanket ban preventing staff going to the tribunal was removed only a couple of years ago but in the only case I know that has been considered by a tribunal, the ban was reapplied immediately.

Richard Tomlinson, who worked for the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), was sacked and tried to apply to the tribunal, claiming unfair dismissal. He was met with the blanket ban in the form of a Ministerial Certificate, very like a public interest immunity certificate. Following attempts to take the case to appeal and to the European Commission of Human Rights the blanket ban was removed but the Foreign Secretary at the time, Malcolm Rifkind, still insisted his case could not be dealt with by the tribunal.

Meanwhile the three tribunals set up to provide a mechanism of complaint for members of the public who feel they have been kept unfairly under surveillance have yet to find in favour of one single person.

I hope that the Comprehensive Spending Review of the three services will recommend changes which will ensure that the staff have rights that the public has rights and that we are really getting value for money. JOHN WADHAM, Director, Liberty, London SE1

War games

EVA PASCOE (Network+, 14 April) is worried about violent computer games. Children have been playing games involving swords, guns, bows and arrows and other weapons almost since children have been playing games at all. Why should a game that happens to have a plug at the end be any more of a threat? LISA DONOVAN, London E1



MILES KINGTON

Israel, America, Manchester United and the secret of unpopularity

NEWCASTLE United have known some bad times recently. Their very expensive footballers seem unable to win matches, and their equally expensive directors seem unable to win friends, or even keep their jobs. This is presumably very bad news in Newcastle, where pride and football tend to go hand in hand, but I cannot say it is very bad news elsewhere - at least, I didn't think so until I saw a headline the other day which said that Newcastle were in danger of slipping from the national affection.

This puzzled me. I didn't know that Newcastle United played any part at all in the national affection. I thought that Geordies rather liked to be slightly apart from the rest of England, and that the rest of England liked them to be slightly apart as well. The idea that Newcastle United is either popular or unpopular had not occurred to me. Indeed, considering that their fortunes have been built on the fortunes

of Sir John Hall, a man who does not seem to inspire much affection even in Newcastle, I would have thought that it was more likely to be unpopular than popular.

But then can any one side in football be popular beyond its local area? Only Manchester United has the reputation of being such a side. Man Utd supporters have the strange distinction of being able to come from anywhere - you don't have to come from Manchester or even to have been to Manchester to be a Man Utd supporter. Indeed, there is one school of thought which says it is probably easier to support Manchester if you have never been there.

There again, this universal feeling in favour of Manchester United has produced a backlash in the shape of a universal feeling against Manchester United. No team is more wanted to win. No team is more wanted to lose. There may be Man Utd supporters who have never been to Man-

chester but there are people who are incredibly irked by Manchester United who have never been near the place, in a way that would never happen, I think, to Chelsea or Liverpool. I don't think Arsenal are universally popular either, but there does seem to be a wave of prayer and desire that Arsenal should overtake Man Utd at the end of this season and deprive them of the title, and it isn't just a wave of relief that it is not a one-horse race after all.

One thing which has contributed to retain sympathy for Manchester United is the memory of the Munich air crash, which hovers in their history almost in the same way that the Holocaust hovers behind Israeli history. But Israel, like Man Utd, is also beginning to find its sympathy credit running low. Somebody was asking on the radio the other day just how long Israelis can go on invoking the Holocaust every time they are criticised, and the answer is, surely, no longer

at all. What Israel is doing to its Arab population is very unpleasant indeed, and rather reminiscent of what people used to do to the Jews in other places. If I were Jewish, I would be ashamed of Israel. I would be in good company. Jonathan Miller is Jewish and he bravely said the other day that he was ashamed of Israel.

But I suppose that when you are top dog at local or international level, you have to get used to being unpopular. The Americans have had a great deal of practice at this (as Britain did a hundred years ago), because nobody likes the self-appointed chief traffic warden of the world. In America's case, there are compensations, of course. The Americans don't mind being universally disliked, because very few of them have noticed that it has happened. They find it easier to bear unpopularity when so many of us put our hands into our pockets and buy so much of their junk culture, from the

Oscar ceremonies to Coke and McDonald's. (Indeed, if you were looking for the most unpopular body in the world, it would have to be someone in America who was unpopular even by American standards. American lawyers, perhaps. British editors of American papers...)

But I don't want to seem sour at the end of the week, so I would like to end on a humorous note. In fact, on a humorous and indelicate note, which brings us back to football, in the shape of an excellent joke I heard from comedian Mark Thomas, as follows: "Which three League football teams have rude words in their names?"

"I don't know. Which three League football teams have rude words in their names?" "Arsenal, Southampton and F-ing Manchester United."

All letters from Man Utd fans, Zionists and American lawyers will be courteously ignored.

هكمان الاصل

Born in the east, educated in the west – a tyrant for the world



RUPERT
CORNWELL

THE LEGACY
OF POL POT

FOR SOME CRIMES there can be no atonement, no purification. "We are clean now," was the quoted reaction of the Khmer Rouge who had guarded Pol Pot in the last months of his life, after he was removed as the guerrilla movement's leader. "His death is good for the Khmer Rouge," said another. "I hope his bad name will vanish with his death." But it never should and, let us pray, it never will. Not in the small Asian country which he has scarred for generations, nor in the world beyond. For Pol Pot was not simply a regional aberration. He is not to be seen as a perverted but logically explicable variant of what these days, in a different context, are called "Asian values". In not one, but two, senses he was also a creation of the West.

The proximate association of course lies in America's war in Vietnam. Without it the North Vietnamese would never have crossed over into Cambodia. B-52s would never have bombed their bases, King Sihanouk might never have been overthrown and the Communist-dominated resistance movement which Pol Pot led to power in 1975 might never have been born. That does not make America responsible for his crimes, any more than the allied powers, having humiliated Germany at Versailles, were therefore to blame for Hitler and the Holocaust. But without the Americans, Pol Pot would not have had his opportunity for revolution.

And where were the germs of that revolution sown? Not in Phnom Penh, Moscow or even Peking – but in Cambodia's imperial capital of Paris, where Saloth Sar, later to become Pol Pot, studied from 1949 to 1952. There was born his devotion to Communism; and again the question arises: why did this ideology invented by Germans to deal with Western social problems thrive best in the East? And why with such brutality in Cambodia? Perhaps France, home of Europe's most single-minded revolution, is part of the answer. Would-be revolutionaries who drink from its culture seem to imbibe a unique ruthlessness, an ability to subordinate the most savage means to the desired end. Algeria is one example. So too the demonic *jusqu'au-boutisme* of Pol Pot.

On the scale of evil established in this most violent century in human history, he belongs, in relative terms, at the very top. To further his dream of an agrarian Marxist regime – sketched upon a blackboard wiped totally clean, where every link with the past, with other traditions and philosophies, with the outside world, was ground for execution – between 1 and 1.7 million people, up to almost a quarter of the population, were murdered. Hitler never managed as much. Conceivably, the Lenin/Stalin tandem, a closer historic parallel with Pol Pot, did, if you accept the worst estimates of the purges, terrors and the famines they inflicted upon the Soviet Union in the name of Communism. Saddam Hussein, Slobodan Milosevic and others

who exercise us so much today, are minnows by comparison.

But the most terrible thing to be learnt from Pol Pot is that we never learn. He was proof that the first half of this most violent century in history did not have the patent rights on human holocaust. Even more depressing though, the circumstances that permit these holocausts do not change. Just as the world could not believe the first reports of Hitler's extermination of the Jews, and was long duped over Stalin's terror, so the accounts of those who managed to escape the sealed Cambodia of the late 1970s were only partially believed. Surely, no one could do such things, or even want to do such things. How much more comfortable not to contemplate such awful possibilities. How quickly we forgot the reality of Auschwitz, barely 30 years before.

But by the time Pol Pot turned his malign attentions to his fellow citizens, Cambodia did not matter. The Vietnam war had already been won and lost – less than a fortnight after he entered Phnom Penh, the North Vietnamese marched into Saigon and the last helicopter took off from the roof of the US Embassy. No American wanted to hear of Indochina ever again. Five years later the dimension of Pol Pot's genocide was becoming apparent – but realpolitik took over: from 1980 America was quietly backing the Khmer Rouge, in the higher interest of getting the Vietnamese out of Cambodia.

Caught in such geopolitical tides, a tiny faraway country has no chance. Cambodia possessed no precious commodity such as the oil that saved Kuwait from Saddam. And, one is tempted to add, back then there was no CNN or BBC World TV to bring the truth into our homes – only brave print journalists

Pol Pot was not simply
a regional aberration,
not just a perverted
variant of 'Asian values'

like Sydney Schanberg of the *New York Times*, whose reporting made the term "Killing Field" a shorthand for state-sponsored mass-murder. But don't expect miracles from modern communications technology. The global village still has its unlit back alleys; Algeria for instance, where six years of atrocities have gone virtually uncovered. It is simply too dangerous, even for the boldest TV crew with super-miniaturized equipment. And even if we saw the images every evening, could we summon the will to intervene? I doubt it – at least not until the chaos stopped Algerian gas from reaching our central heating systems.

So what now? Towards the end of his life there was much talk of bringing Pol Pot before an international court to answer for his crimes. But China, his main supporter during his rule, would almost certainly have blocked it; nor would countries like Thailand and the US, which helped him later, have been overjoyed at the prospect. The best to be hoped is that some of his main accomplices might be sent for trial. A case of monkeys without the organ-grinder perhaps. But it would at least be a start, an attempt to explain something which for most of us is simply inexplicable. The greatest danger of all is that Pol Pot slips, unremembered and unremembered, into the small print of history. That would be a final ghastly injustice to Cambodia and a dreadful mistake by the world. Maybe, just maybe, human nature is perfectible. If not, then those who forget the past are condemned to repeat it.

How TV-dinners show the decline of all that right-thinkers value



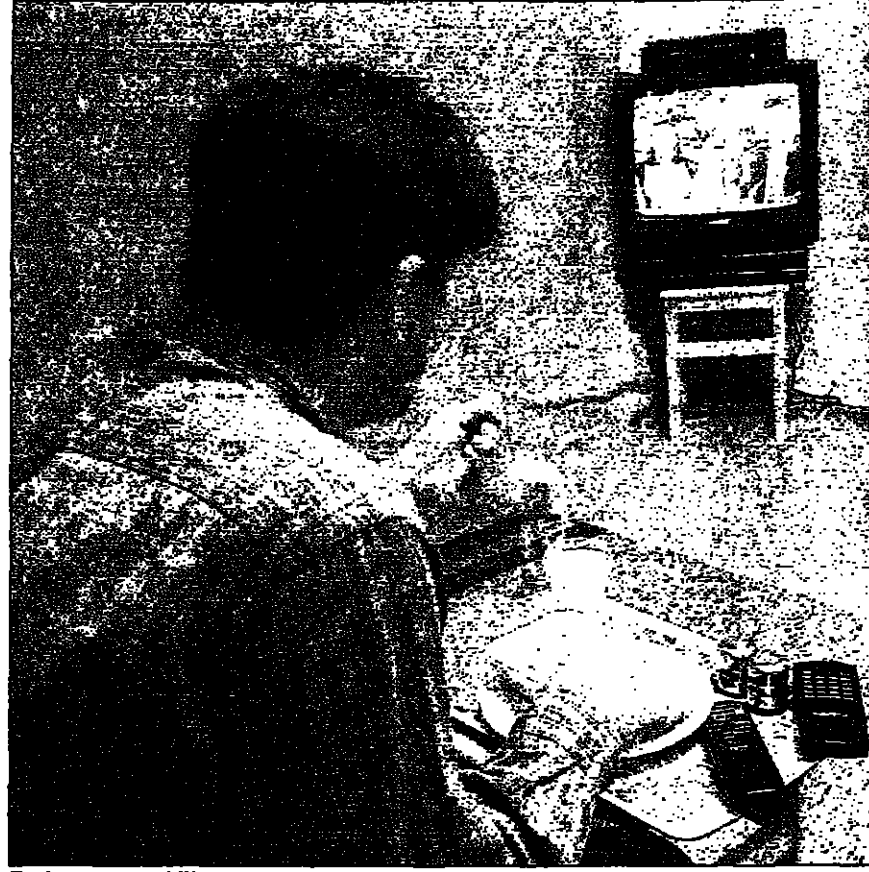
SUZANNE
MOORE
SENTIMENTAL
CRITICISM

Any right thinking person should be very concerned about the future of the right in this country. As Labour has colonised so much formerly right-wing thinking in the name of the "third way", what us charitable souls wonder will the right be able to hang on to as pure right-wing thought? They may dabble with various libertarian perspectives but even this does not go down well with their ageing constituency. This is some thing of a shame as even this illustrious administration need a plausible opposition in order to counter its unbearable smugness.

Instead though we have to put up with various missives from that increasingly bizarre "think-tank" the Social Affairs Unit. Its latest effort *Faking It: The Sentimentalisation of Modern Society*, edited by Digby Anderson and Peter Mullen, is an indication of the muddle that currently passes as right-wing thinking. Really this book should be called *Modern Life is Rubbish* but unfortunately that title has already been used by that far superior think tank known as Blur.

The various thinkers gathered together in this book rail against such a variety of targets that it is impossible to see how the right can re-brand themselves, never mind formulate a political programme based on anything other than "the way we were". Their only narrative is the one of return to a mythical past.

So what doesn't the Social Affairs Unit like? Well, it doesn't like child-centred learning, counselling, environmentalism, alternative medicine, the mourning of Diana, welfare policies that do not blame the poor, the denial of the doctrine of original sin, Martin Amis, modern music, the sanitisation of modern church services oh and er... the way we eat. "There are families in Britain and America with members, more frequently among the young, who eat more or less like pigs... Each human pig decides for himself when he is hungry and fixes himself something." The decline of the family meal



Eating alone: chill-and-cook dinners drive the right barmy

Mykel Nicolaou

is sign of the coming apocalypse for these guys.

As always some of their targets are perfectly legitimate. There is an over-sentimentalisation of nature, for instance, among certain environmentalists. There are problems among the burgeoning counselling industry in which untrained people may set themselves up as therapists with no certifiable accreditation. Yet mostly this book is a mish-mash of prejudice and nostalgia which refuses on every

as he does by attending a church service. This presumably is the kind of fake religion that The Rev Peter Mullen so despises. This is about worshipping oneself, one's own need to be affirmed, seeking cosy self-esteem rather than understanding that in order to encounter and worship the Almighty terrifying God one requires the discipline of a good old-fashioned church service.

One can read all this however as an affirmation of much that

What they call all fake, others would call post-modern, where they see sentimentality, others would see only cynicism. In other words, are problems caused because we are prepared to believe anything or because we can't really be bothered to believe in much in the first place?

Of course, on many levels we have become lazy and self-indulgent, yet the new Right's promise of a trickle-down effect in terms of wealth actually

leashed by the global free-market required new kinds of workers, some of them female.

In Digby Anderson's own tirade about "the sentimentalisation of civilised eating", he rants against the vegetarians and the microwavers but he is most angry about the role of women in the kitchen. Victorian cook books were, he tells us, full of wifely virtue. The kitchen did not exist for female self-indulgence: instead she must learn to follow rules and practice and perfect recipes. Now western civilisation is clearly in peril because women's magazines tell women how to cook dishes as quickly as possible even allowing them to substitute ingredients of their own. "She is encouraged to lie and cheat, disguising this as that, to cut corners yet present things so her guests will think she has been slaving all day." This goes straight to the guts of modern life. You can't even get your wife to stick to the goddamn recipe.

If a chill-and-cook dinner sends these guys barmy, you can imagine how they feel about more important things. Never mind the detested happy-clap, what about the feminisation of political discourse, what Mark Steyn calls "a drag-queen travesty of what the woman's movement intended". Steyn is right to question the false empathy that politicians are forced to exude in the name of emotional correctness. Yet what do we mean by the feminisation of politics? Was it Mo Mowlam's touchy-feely style that brokered a peace settlement, or her sheer bloody determination? Or maybe some of both?

Is it necessarily a feminising, therefore emasculating, move for public figures to admit their failures as well as their feelings? I'm afraid my feeling is that these guys should just get out more often. Where they see a deeply sentimental culture I see a deeply cynical one, where everything is excused in the name of supposedly distanced irony. We need people to care more not less, to be able to formulate the value judgements that these authors bemoan the lack of.

All of this is enough to make me feel quite nostalgic about the right – didn't they used to be somebody? They could have been contenders. Now they merely look like tired, old men muttering to themselves in the corner hoping that some one out there is listening. Or perhaps I'm just being sentimental and faking some empathy for those who still refuse to understand the meaning of the word.

The Social Affairs Unit doesn't like child-centred learning, counselling, environmentalism, alternative medicine, the mourning of Diana or the way we eat

level to accept that life has changed and that certain aspects of it cannot be changed back. The decline of what they call the "dependable institutions" was, of course, accelerated by their heroine Margaret Thatcher. The secularisation of society, the promotion of individualism, of material success no matter what the spiritual and social cost was part of the essentially revolutionary project that in the good old days we called the New Right.

Even the current leader of the Tory party would come under fire for his latest admission that he feels as close to God by walking on the Yorkshire moors

cultural theorists of a more liberal persuasion have been saying for some time. These people recognise that "Post-Diana, Britain will indeed be another country. That week we witnessed a defining moment in our history." There are those on both the left and the right who were appalled at the sentimentality surrounding Diana's death. Yet whereas as some of us saw an opening up, others saw a closing down, a triumph of vague faith over reason.

Like many on the left, the authors of *Faking It* are worried, although they never use the phrase, about "cultural relativism" or the end of certainty.

achieved the trickle-down effect only in terms of moral bankruptcy. Our lack of faith in institutions *per se* was not brought about by a wayward princess, the green movement or even Alice Walker – another of their peculiar targets – but by those at the heart of power itself. Family life has altered not because it was undermined by the need for instant gratification, but because the economic forces un-

Free the teachers, they're better than their unions



DAVID
AARONOVITCH
NIGEL DE GRUCHY'S
GROUCHY VIEWS

For much of the last month I have felt as though someone has been calling me up every day and trying to shake me down. Not with libel writs or threats of violence, nor by sending round unwanted pizzas or hearses, but with making things difficult for my kids at school. You know, awkward: stopping a lesson here maybe, or getting school trips cancelled for a term, or closing down the choir after school – that kind of stuff. And, mild fellow though I am, I've just about had enough of it.

So, let me thrust forward, blinking on to the villain's dais, and crown with a garland of mouldy leeks, Mr Nigel de Gruchy, General Secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters' Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT). Mr de Gruchy, as you will see – though certainly not alone in trying to mess up my children's education

– exemplifies the attitude of defensive, backward-looking, reactive and self-pitying conservatism, that seems to have prevailed for 20 years among sections of Britain's hopelessly divided and competing teaching unions. I await his appearances with fear: his dedicated features and his Dickensian habit of adding a hanging "eh", like a verbal wart on the end of his consonants, inevitably accompany some terrible complaint of injury, or ingenious objection to the slightest change. He's degrouchy. He's degrouchy. He's not delightful.

At this point some of you will be mentally defending him from my intemperate attack. Good for you. But all I ask is that you look at the evidence. Just examine what has been said over the last three weeks or so.

Let us begin with the campaign to cut down on bureaucracy in the classroom. Teachers, the argument goes, are overburdened with form-filling and paper shuffling, associated with testing, inspections, reports and so on. Mr Blunkett has suggested that he is sympathetic to this complaint, and is considering ways in which the admin can be reduced.

But in case Mr B hasn't got his arse sufficiently into gear by the next autumn term, Mr de Gruchy has a cunning plan. His members may walk out of any extracurricular meetings that last more than an hour a week, they could well boycott "administrative tasks" like collecting money for school trips, or copying letters to parents. And they may not write anything longer than 400 words. According to Mr de Gruchy, this is "industrial action with a halo", because its implementation will not af-

fect the education of children. Strike One.

But that is by no means the end of it in the industrial action department. The NASUWT is completely opposed (as is its rival, the NUT) to Mr Blunkett's Education Action Zones, which may lead to some private sector involvement in school management. So antagonistic is Mr de Gruchy to EAZs that when the head of a rival union was said to be in discussion about setting one up, along with the CRE, the Nuffield Foundation and the Com-

Mr de Gruchy's members may be taking up 'industrial action with a halo'

mercial Union, Mr de Gruchy commented: "If I had done what [he] had done I would quite rightly be summarily dismissed. For [him] to be convening at a scheme which could lead to the undermining of pay and conditions is outrageous and deplorable." Once again, there is a threat of industrial action. Strike Two.

Then three weeks or so ago, Margaret Hodge MP, chair of the House of Commons Education Select Committee said that perhaps the six week summer break was too long, because research indicated that "pupils forgot too much of what they had learned". Now, I have no idea whether this is correct, but I do think it might be worth discussing. But not old Nigel. "There

would be," he shot back, "undoubtedly demands from my members for industrial action if teachers were faced with an extension of the school year." Sure enough, on Wednesday there was an overwhelming vote to take industrial action "to counter any proposal to alter teachers working days or holidays." That's that then. Strike Three.

It is, of course, always possible that I have missed Mr de Gruchy's sunny side – all these criminally underreported speeches when he has commended the

Government for doing X and parents for doing Y. Instead I invariably seem to find him urging the exclusion of rowdy pupils from schools with a consequential insouciance that reminds me of Tom Lehrer's song about the German rocket scientist, who first made V2s and then weapons for the USA: "As long as I send them up, who cares where they come down?" That's not my department, says Werner von Braun.

Not to be outdone, the militants in the NUT (whose rivalry with the NASUWT is one in mind of the Teamsters versus the Longshoremen circa 1955) last week voted for a ballot on industrial action if they weren't given a four-day week and a season ticket to Glyndebourne. But the vote was nar-

row, the ballot will be lost and in general Taffy Doug McAvoy, the NUT has a leader capable of arguing that the Government's policies are "a mixed basket... On balance Labour has done very well."

All this de Gruchyism matters. Not least because it represents itself as the experience of real teachers, when in fact, it isn't. Take, for example, the debate at last week's NUT conference on Mr Blunkett's suggested "literacy hour". Delegate after delegate stood up to equate this imposition to East Germany before 1989. They voted overwhelmingly to reject it.

But in the middle of the debate one Bristol teacher stood up to say that they had implemented such a strategy in her school for two years – and had seen enormous improvement among middle and lower ability children. "I don't know of any school that has started the project that has regretted it," she said.

That was the authentic voice of the teachers that I meet. Much, for instance, is made of the superior status and morale of German teachers. But a friend's daughter who has been through a Rhineland Gymnasium, and is now studying for A-levels in North London, expresses astonishment at the high level of involvement and motivation of British teachers compared to their pampered Teutonic counterparts.

Nothing gains teachers more support in their struggle for resources than the feeling among Mums and Dads that they're doing their level best for the children. Likewise, nothing loses it faster than the thought that our kids have become the front-line collateral casualties in a war for union membership.

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Pol Pot

"WHO are you, comrade Pol Pot?" asked the first journalist allowed into Cambodia under Khmer Rouge rule in 1978. The reply was evasive.

Pol Pot is now reported dead. Not for the first time. In a 40-year political career, he specialised in withdrawing to the shadows, "retiring to study", spreading rumours of his demise. This kept opponents in the dark, and took pressure off his allies. Pol Pot's name, after all, is that of one of the 20th century's most brutal mass murderers.

For another reason, too, a death in his bed may be just what Pol Pot needed. US and Cambodian government officials were planning to establish a tribunal to try him and other Khmer Rouge leaders for genocide.

Pol Pot was born Saloth Sar, in the province of Kompong Thom, in 1925. His parents owned 12 hectares of land. Under their son's regime, they would have been "class enemies". But few villagers thought so then. Rich or poor, everyone tilled the fields, fished the river, cooked tasty soups, propitiated local spirits and French colonial officials, or thronged Buddhist festivities. A French official described Kompong Thom people as "the most deeply Cambodian and the least susceptible to our influence".

The Saloth family had royal connections. Pol Pot's cousin was one of King Monivong's wives, his sister Sanxung a consort. His brother Loth Suong made a career in palace protocol. Pol Pot joined him at the age of six.

This country boy never worked a ricefield, or knew much of village life. A year in a royal monastery was followed by six in a Catholic school. His upbringing was strict. The girl next door, Saki Slong, recalls that Suong "was very serious and would not gamble or allow children to play near his home". The palace compound was closed, the old king a French puppet. Outside, Phnom Penh's 100,000 inhabitants were mostly Chinese shopkeepers and Vietnamese workers. Few Cambodian children were so removed from their vernacular culture.

In 1945, demanding independence from France, Buddhist monks led Khmer nationalists

in common cause with Vietnamese Communists. In 1948, Pol Pot went to study radioelectricity in Paris. Travelling through Saigon, he felt ill at ease in bustling Vietnam, like a "dark monkey from the mountains".

Suong got a letter from him in France, requesting the official biography of King Norodom Sihanouk. He replied: "Don't get involved in politics." Pol Pot was already in the Cambodian section of the French Communist Party, then in its Stalinist heyday. But he was self-effacing, charming. He kept company with Khieu Ponnary, the first Khmer woman to get the *baccalauréat*. The couple chose Bastille Day for their wedding back home in 1956.

Pol Pot's Paris student friends included Khieu Samphan, Ieng Sary and Son Sen. Samphan remains a leader of the Khmer Rouge insurgents today. But Pol Pot had early disagreements with Hou Yuen, later a popular Marxist intellectual, and one of their first victims on winning power. Pol stood out in his choice of a *nom de plume*: the "Original Cambodian". Others preferred less radical, modernist code-names like "Free Khmer" or "Khmer Worker".

Pol Pot failed his course three years in a row. His ship arrived home in 1953. The previous day, King Sihanouk had declared martial law. Cambodia's independence movement was becoming radicalised by French colonial force. His brother Saloth Chhay joined the Cambodian and Vietnamese Communists, and took him along. The Vietnamese began teaching Pot to "work with the masses". To someone raised in the palace, this was a patronising slight, like his failure to rise quickly to leadership, despite overseas experience. He decided, "Khmers should do everything on their own".

Cambodia did not need to learn or import anything from its neighbours. Rather, it would recover its pre-Buddhist glory by rebuilding the powerful economy of the medieval Angkor kingdom, and regain ancient "lost territory" from Vietnam and Thailand. Pol Pot treasured the Cambodian "race", not its individual members. National

impurities included the foreign-educated (with the exception of his Paris group) and "hereditary enemies", especially Vietnamese. To return Cambodians to their imagined "origins" Pol Pot needed war and secrecy as "the basis" of the revolution. He never admitted he was Saloth Sar.

After French and Vietnamese forces left Cambodia, Pol Pot rose in the Communist ranks. In 1962 he became party leader after his predecessor,



Pol Pot: one of the 20th century's most brutal mass murderers

a former Buddhist monk, mysteriously disappeared. He consolidated his control during eight years of guerrilla warfare (1967-75), using the code-name "Pol". The Communist Party of Kampuchea leadership, once rural, Buddhist, moderate and pro-Vietnamese, was now urban, French-educated, radical and anti-Vietnamese. Pol Pot had a thousand Vietnamese-trained comrades quietly murdered. By 1978 their fate was

shared by half the members of the Party Central Committee, which had rarely if ever met. Several factors favoured the rise of Pol Pot's CPK. Destabilisation of Cambodia began in 1966 after the American escalation in next-door Vietnam. Royal repression increasingly drove veterans of Cambodia's independence struggle into disaffection, where the Pol Pot group subjected them to its plan for a new rebellion. The

Chinese Communists gave Pol Pot's faction support and manoeuvrability against more moderate pro-Vietnamese rivals.

In 1969, embroiled in Vietnam, the US began a secret B-52 bombardment of Cambodia. A year later, Sihanouk was overthrown by the US-backed Lon Nol. The Vietnam war spilled across and a new war tore Cambodia apart. American planes dropped 540,000 tonnes of bombs. One hundred thousand peasants were killed.

Pol Pot's forces used the devastation as an excuse for their brutal, radical policies and purges. In 1973 the CIA reported that Communist recruits were "using damage caused by B-52 strikes as the main theme of their propaganda" and that their campaign had been "effective".

In a 1975 victory speech, Pol Pot claimed "clean victory... without any foreign connection". In the most radical revolution ever, Cambodia cut itself off from the world. Foreign and minority languages were banned, and all neighbouring countries attacked. Rice and endangered wildlife were exported to China in exchange for weapons. Cambodia's cities were emptied, its Buddhist religion and culture destroyed. Peasants were forced into unpaid collective labour. Families were separated, family meals prohibited. A Khmer Rouge document noted laconically: "There is a little friction with the people. But we can abandon the people. There is no problem."

In this prison camp state, eight million inmates did solitary confinement. And 1.7 million of them were worked, starved or beaten to death. As Pol Pot put it in 1976, "Don't be afraid to lose one or two people of bad background."

Pol Pot claimed to be "four to ten years ahead" of other Asian Communist states, adding, "We have no model in building up our new society."

This disguised the influence of Maoism, in the call for a "Super Great Leap Forward", of Stalinism, and even of the French Revolution, copied by redesigning Cambodia's working month into 10-day weeks. Dissident Communists who favoured "a system of plenty"

were considered corrupted by "a little prosperity", "taken to pieces" by material things.

Pol Pot could not imagine Cambodia at peace. He shared the traditional Khmer elite's racism, and designs on "lost territories". Raids on Vietnam, Thailand, and Laos began simultaneously in 1977. Pol Pot ordered his troops to "kill the enemy at will, and the contemptible Vietnamese will surely shriek like monkeys screaming all over the forest". His troops were to "tie up the enemy by the throat, shoulders and ribs on both sides, his waist, his thighs, his knees, his calves, his ankles, ... smashing and breaking his head".

Pol Pot was honorifically known as "the Organisation" - one which made speeches, watched movies, was sometimes "busy working", but could be asked favours if one dared. Wedded to this, his first wife Khieu Ponnary reportedly went mad. One day in 1978, Pol Pot's poster went up in a mess hall in Kompong Thom. Loth Suong gasped. It was his own brother who had been running the country for four years! Terrified, Suong kept quiet.

When Cambodian Communists rebelled in the eastern zone in May 1978, Pol Pot's armies were unable to crush them quickly. The regime broadcast a call not only to "exterminate the 50 million Vietnamese" but also to "purify the masses of the people" of Cambodia. Of 1.5 million easterners, branded as "Khmer bodies with Vietnamese minds", at least 100,000 were exterminated in six months. In 1979, surviving rebel leaders succeeded Pol Pot, after Maoist drove his army into Thailand.

Pol Pot predicted that only "piles of the enemy's bones" would remain. His legacy is piles of Cambodian bones. Mass graves mark every district with the bodies of his victims. Yale University's Cambodian Genocide Program has so far located 200 "killing field" sites, with a total of 9,000 mass graves. We suspect there may be another 11,000 such sites in Cambodia.

In a secret briefing to his commanders in 1988, Pol Pot blamed most of the killings on "Vietnamese agents". But he defended having massacred defeated officers, soldiers and officials. "This strain of the imperialists had to be totally destroyed," he insisted. In "abandoning Communism" now, Pol Pot added, his movement discards its "peel", but not the fruit inside. "The politics has changed, but the spirit remains the same." The Khmer Rouge predicted their return with this slogan: "When the water rises, the fish eat the ants, but when the water recedes, the ants eat the fish."

In August 1996, the Khmer Rouge began to break up. Pol Pot's former brother-in-law Ieng Sary defected, taking his troops into an alliance with the Cambodian government. This started a scramble among the Khmer Rouge remnants. In June 1997, Pol Pot suspected Son Sen of planning to follow Sary. He had Sen and his family shot, and drove trucks over the 14 bodies as Pot's dwindling forces fled. In turn, from other Khmer Rouge troops led by Khieu Samphan, Mok, and Nuon Chea.

They soon rounded up Pol Pot, and put him through a jungle show trial. His longtime comrades sentenced him to house arrest in a Khmer Rouge village, where he was allowed to give interviews, complain of mosquitoes, and deny his responsibility for genocide. To say that millions died is too much" was one of his last public statements.

Two weeks ago, another Khmer Rouge mutiny led by Ke Pauk, Pot's former deputy military commander, drove Khieu Samphan, Mok and Nuon Chea to the Thai border. They remain at large, as do Ke Pauk and Ieng Sary. An international tribunal would establish responsibility for the crimes committed when all six men ruled one of the most brutal regimes of the century. If the surviving five escape justice, Pol Pot may have served his purpose.

Ben Kiernan

Saloth Sar (Pol Pot), guerrilla and politician: born Kompong Thom province, Cambodia 19 May 1925; Prime Minister of Cambodia 1976-79; twice married (one daughter); died near Angkor Veng, Cambodia 15 April 1998.

Sir Ronald Millar

RONALD MILLAR enjoyed two lives, both highly successful. In both he mixed, in his words, with the stars.

Until middle age he was a man of the theatre - actor, playwright and Hollywood scriptwriter. This love of the theatre he had inherited from his actress mother. In the last three decades of his life he achieved another sort of literary fame, as wordsmith to three prime ministers. In the 1979 election campaign he supplied Margaret Thatcher with her defiant "The Old Testament prophets did not say, 'Brothers, I want a consensus'". He also suggested the words attributed to St Francis as she entered Downing Street for the first time as Prime Minister: "Where there is discord, may we bring harmony, where there is error, may we bring truth."

Millar's father died when his son was only 18 months old. He was educated at Charterhouse and after a year studying Classics at King's College, Cambridge, he joined the Navy in 1940. He was invalided out of the service in 1943 and did not resume his studies. After some acting, he found his niche as a playwright, having performed in London before he was 30. Between 1948 and 1954 he turned his back on austere Britain and enjoyed a lucrative career writing scripts for MGM in Hollywood.

On his return, he worked hard as a playwright. In 1964 he adapted Rudolf Besier's *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*, as a musical, *Robert and Elizabeth*. It enjoyed a long run, as did his *Abelard and Heloise* (1970), based on Helen Waddell's *Peter Abelard*. He also successfully adapted a number of C.P. Snow's novels, notably *The Affair* (1961) and *The Masters*

(1967). An interest in politics led him to write William Clark's novel *Number 10* for the stage (1967): a fictive visit to the house was arranged while Harold Wilson was in office. Millar was a popular writer in the best sense of the term. He could appeal to what is now called *Middle England*. Politics then intervened.

Millar's longevity as a speechwriter was a tribute to his tact and obedience to the injunction of the successful speechwriter - to help the speaker say what he or she wishes, not what the writer wishes to say. He was not a partisan (by profession he was a playwright and theatre administrator), he was never a member of a party; and he wrote speeches for nearly 30 years for Edward Heath, Margaret Thatcher and John Major, each of whom came to regard one another with emotions ranging from dislike to contempt.

Modern political leaders have to make so many speeches that they need help. A major speech takes some 20 hours to prepare and politicians no longer have that kind of time. The White House has a large unit devoted to speechwriting. A British prime minister can rely on his civil servants to draft speeches on government business. But for election campaigns, party conferences and other political events he has to turn elsewhere.

Millar had already passed 50 when he became involved in speechwriting. A chance dinner conversation in 1969 about how appalling he found Conservative communications led to a summons to Central Office and a meeting with Heath. Henceforth his contacts with politicians were always with those at the top. During the 1970 general election campaign he was suddenly asked to deliver a radio speech, which

he had scripted, in place of a shadow minister who had been awarded it as a consolation for missing out on a television appearance. The shadow minister was Margaret Thatcher.

Millar was never on the same wavelength as Ted Heath. Too often the brooding leader took for granted the services of his wordsmiths and rarely made an effort to engage with the preparation of his speeches. Millar believed in sustaining himself with good food and drink during speechwriting sessions. At four in the morning during the 1970 election a parched and exhausted Millar spied a bottle of whisky and, thinking that he deserved some compensation, moved to it. He was stopped short by a secretary's warning: "That belongs to Mr Heath."

Millar was amused at Hugo Young's characterisation of him as Thatcher's "gag man", whereas she resented the idea that she could not be witty of her own accord. In fact Millar had a special casting role with the speeches, giving his imprimatur to the final version. Shortly before delivery he would spend time alone with Thatcher (as he did with John Major subsequently) and suggest how it should be recited - pauses, emphases - and tone. He would even recite the passages for her. To quote Thatcher - as she quoted Millar - "A speech is a theatrical as well as a political event."

He found writing a Thatcher speech to be hellish and exhilarating. In his 1993 memoirs, *A View from the Wings*, he wrote that it emerged, like the old methods for electing a Tory leader, by "part design, part accident and part a host of disconnected unrelated factors". She expected others to have her energy as they toiled away in the early hours of the morning. As

opposition leader she dismissed drafts from Chris Patten as having "no theme" and a contribution from John Biffen as "a waste of time". Her staff maintained an "ideas for speeches" file, which included old press cuttings, quotations, drafts from ministers, academics and friendly journalists, party officials and advisers. Millar recalled "the agony, the despair and lack of sleep, the sheer impossibility that a coherent sequence of words and thoughts and images and policies could ever emerge, the excitement when a faint glimmer of hope appeared on the horizon". Then he could begin the process of "Ronnification".

Millar's rules for speechwriting are a model to his successors. A speech is to be spoken and heard, rather than read. Use simple everyday words and short sentences - "Write it tight and taut." Be positive and modest. Above all, the writer must be able to hear the voice of the leader in his head. The journalist Roger Carroll wrote speeches for James Callaghan in 1979 and made a point of reading and listening to tapes of Callaghan's speeches so that he could master the cadences. Ted Heath would not make the time to allow speechwriters to share his thinking. One of his helpers said, "He expected the speechwriters to be able to communicate for him the thought that he was incapable of communicating."

A successful speechwriter usually has a close personal relationship with the politician. So many politicians cry out, when faced with the text, "This is not me." In Thatcher's case, she would hand the draft to Millar.

Millar was a great believer in accidents. That was how he got involved with Heath in the first place. Thatcher and then her successor. His most famous



Millar: "Write it tight and taut" Photograph: Rex Features

line was inserted in Margaret Thatcher's conference speech in 1980. She and the Government were in trouble and there was much talk that there would be a U-turn in economic policy. He based the phrase "The lady's not for turning" on Christopher Fry's play *The Lady's Not for Turning*. He expected the media to concentrate on the preceding line, "You turn if you want to". Instead, newspapers and broadcasters led with the new phrase, which seemed to epitomise Thatcher.

Because Thatcher liked Millar, and perhaps because he was a bachelor, he often spent time in her company. A political leader needs a crony or a friend, somebody with whom she can gossip and relax and be sure that the friend will not ask for any-

thing in return or betray confidences. Although devoted to her he was also capable of speaking frankly to "Margaret". Sometimes his disapproval was implicit, as when Chris Patten was regularly passed over for preference. She had Millar in attendance during the fraught negotiations over what to say in the Westland confidence debate ("I may not be Prime Minister in 24 hours") and how she should defend herself while keeping the recently resigned Leon Brittan and Michael Heseltine both on board.

He was with her just before her famous Bruges speech in 1988. Although the impact was explosive he had done much to soften its tone. "You don't have to show how strong you are, Margaret," he said. He vainly

advised against the "Back to Basics" passage in John Major's conference speech in 1993.

His experience of comforting actors who suffered last-minute nerves came in handy for getting a prime minister into the appropriate mood before delivering a speech. For Thatcher this involved getting her to relax. Hours before giving the 1993 conference speech Major was in a state, at the end of a dreadful week. A critical press, disloyal leaking from cabinet colleagues and constant sniping from Thatcher's friends as well as her own unhelpful interventions had got to him. Millar spent the time, not rehearsing the speech but encouraging Major to pull himself together.

Millar regarded Major as the best off-the-cuff communicator of the leaders he worked with. Heath had no feel for words and was not interested in trying. Thatcher worked hard and achieved a kind of stardom. Major was capable of doing it for himself. When he addressed a farewell party for one of the No 10 staff an admiring Douglas Hurd (who had suffered as Ted Heath's wordsmith) said to Millar, "A nice speech, did you do it?" "No," was the reply. "Did you?"

Millar was much in demand for speeches. On one occasion he drafted a speech for the Lord Mayor of London at the Guildhall Banquet as well as Margaret Thatcher's reply. When the speeches were exchanged, she commented on how the former's speech was like one of Millar's. Another public figure presumed too readily that Millar was a ready perk for people such as himself and got him to write a speech. After waiting a month or so in vain after the speech Millar sent him an invoice.

Millar was a man of great charm and impeccable manners.

He was gentle and never forced his opinions. In the speech-writing sessions his "Do you really think so?" or "Maybe" was code for dissent. Some of his dislikes stemmed from identification with the party leader. Thus, the BBC had too many "left-wingers", as did the Civil Service; witness the way some in John Major's Private Office in No 10 began to distance themselves in the 1992 election as they anticipated a Labour victory. His memoirs do not convey his sense of betrayal at Sir Geoffrey Howe's fatal (to Thatcher) resignation statement in November 1990. But he was also disappointed at the attacks from Thatcher and her entourage on John Major. Listening to her criticisms he would reply, "After all, you chose him." He was taken aback in 1992 to be told by a friend that he was now considered to be on "the other side".

Of course Millar had another life as a successful playwright and, from 1977, deputy chairman of the Theatre Royal, Haymarket. He was well off and refused any payment for his speechwriting services ("Very sensible," said C.P. Snow - but was such a mercenary man serious?). As with all speechwriters, satisfaction came from the applause that greeted his words, when spoken by the political leader. But, recently, glancing through a volume of one prime minister's speeches, he metaphorically raised his eyebrows when he saw that the copyright for the speeches was - Margaret Thatcher's.

Dennis Kavanagh

Ronald Graeme Millar, playwright, screenwriter and speechwriter: born Reading, Berkshire 12 November 1919; deputy chairman, Theatre Royal, Haymarket 1977-98; Kt 1980; died London 16 April 1998.

DEATHS

MADDocks: Dr Lucy Bacteriological. Beloved wife of John Robert Maddocks (deceased). Died at Chislehurst, peacefully, after a short illness, in her 94th year. Much loved and greatly missed by her daughter, two step-granddaughters and three step-grandsons, Tom, William and Adam.

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

and the many people she had helped. Enquiries to W. Eden & Sons Ltd, 0181-309 2002.

RAPP: (nee Rodzianko). Helen, at home, over Easter, aged 77. Beloved mother of Miriam and Zina, and grandmother of Darius, Roman, Hannah, Naomi and Sara. Funeral at All Saints' Russian Orthodox Church, Emmanuel Gardens, London SW7, on Tuesday 21 April at 1.15pm. Donations to United Palace or flowers and enquiries to Loverton & Sons, 222 Eversholt Street, London WC1, 0171-387 0075.

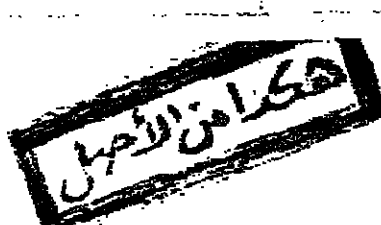
IN MEMORIAM
LANGMIDGLEY: Violet. Celebrating your birthday today: the best and kindest of mothers; the staunchest of friends. Remembering also the good times with Doris and the laughter. Your family and friends.

BIRTHDAYS
Mrs Srinavani Bandaranaike, former prime minister of Sri Lanka, 82; Miss Clare Francis, novelist and yachtswoman, 52; Mrs Anne Harris, former National Chairman, National Federation of Women's Institutes, 73; Miss Olivia Hussey, actress, 47.

Mr James Last, bandleader, 69; The Hon Sir Humphrey Maud, Deputy Secretary General of the Commonwealth, 64; Mr Riccardo Patrese, grand prix driver, 44; Mrs Dora Saint ("Miss Read"), writer, 85; The Right Rev John Yates, former Bishop of Gloucester, 73.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS
Prince Edward, Visiting the Duke of Edinburgh's Award International Foundation, near Lahore, Pakistan. Royal, President, Royal Yachting Association. Also, attends the RYA National Yacht Sales Conference at Royal Solihull Club, East Lawes, Warwick.

Changing of the Guard
The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment (minus the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards) will change the Guard at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am.



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FINANCIAL JOURNAL OF THE YEAR

Pound surges as exports plummet

By Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

THE POUND jumped on the foreign exchange market yesterday, piling on the agony for exporters even as the British Chambers of Commerce reported that export orders and sales were at their lowest since 1991.

It gained nearly three pence to climb above DM3.05, and nearly a cent against the dollar to reach \$1.69, while the sterling index rose a full point to 108.1.

The yen was weaker across the board yesterday after it became clear that Wednesday's G7 meeting had not reached a concrete agreement to support the Japanese currency. In addition, earlier fears in the markets of a rise in German interest rates after today's Bundesbank Council meeting went into retreat.

The warning signs of recession in manufacturing, along with suggestions of slower growth in services, in the influential BCC survey, had little impact on the currency markets. Hawks and doves in the City both found evidence to support their case in the detail of the results.

Confirming other evidence of the weak state of manufacturing in the first few months of this year, the survey reported a fall in home and export orders and sales.

slower employment growth and lower investment intentions. The export figures for manufacturing had only been worse once in the history of the survey.

Small and medium sized businesses were being hit hardest, the Chambers of Commerce said. Deteriorating cash-flow was a particular problem for the smallest.

Manufacturers said pay pressures had not changed, remaining at an uncomfortable level, but lower costs meant few intended to raise the prices they charged during the next few months.

The survey also showed clear evidence that the strong pound is feeding through to service sector firms too. They reported a drop in export orders and deliveries.

Other indicators for services were more robust. Export and home sales and home orders declined slightly but planned employment and investment increased and confidence remained high.

Of most concern to the hawks, recruitment difficulties increased again, matching their 1990 record level. The balance reporting pressure to increase pay settlements rose from 24 per cent to 28 per cent.

Richard Iley, UK economist at ABN Amro, said: "There is support here for both sides of the argument. It depends where you look." He argued that next month would bring a final increase in interest rates as

there was nothing to suggest that growth in the service sector, which makes up more than two-thirds of the economy, had slowed from its recent rapid pace.

Other City experts predicted rates could go no higher. David Hillier at Barclays Capital said: "The key news is that there are clear signs activity in the service sector has slowed."

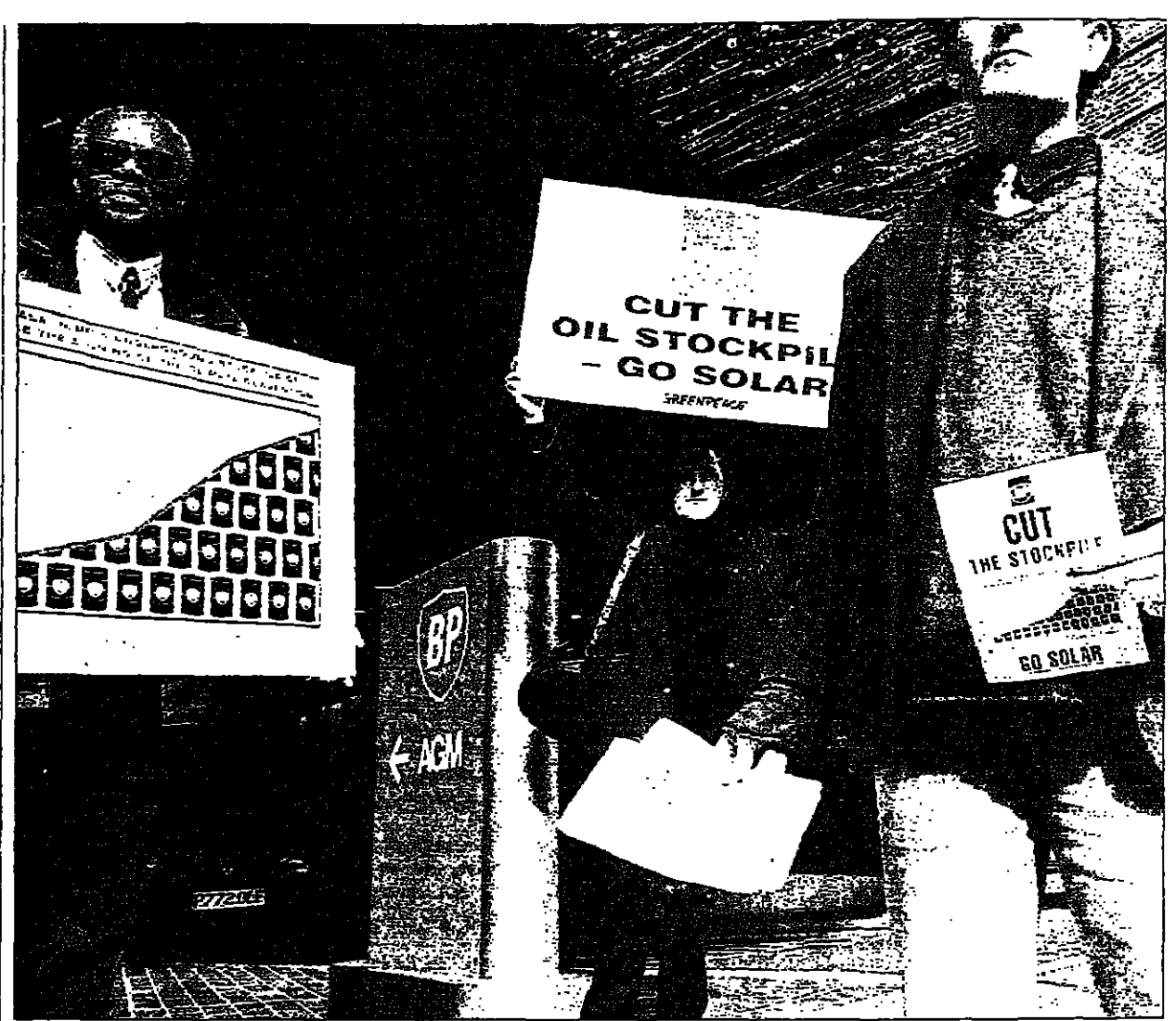
This was the BCC's view too. Mr Peters said: "Exporters in both manufacturing and services are now taking a real battering. Cheap imports are adding to the pressure on manufacturers at home, with clear signs of a knock-on effect on the service sector."

The currency markets concluded that the G7 meeting this week had ruled out co-ordinated intervention to support the flagging yen, although some residual caution about the possibility remained.

Eisuke Sakakibara, Japan's "Mr Yen", said the communiqué left open the possibility of a support operation, but Robert Rubin, the US Treasury Secretary, said this had not been discussed.

Mr Sakakibara said: "It is very rare for the G7 statement to speak about the currency by singling out a certain currency and mentioning that it is not desirable for that currency to have an excessive depreciation."

But Mr Rubin denied that a joint intervention plan had been raised.



BP to invest record £3.5bn

By John Willcock

BRITISH Petroleum said it plans to invest over £3.5bn this year, the highest level for the last decade, but that it was delaying plans for a US\$1bn (£591m) ethylene-making plant in Indonesia because of the financial crisis in the Far East.

The announcements at BP's annual general meeting in London yesterday came against a background of protests by

Greenpeace against BP's expansion of oil production, including the protest shown above. Greenpeace claims that BP is in effect stockpiling carbon-based products which, when burnt, will cause "dangerous rates of temperature and sea level rise."

John Browne, chief executive of BP told shareholders that the company plans to divest around £500m-worth of assets, bringing this year's net capital expenditure

to around £3bn. BP plans to keep its net debt around £4.5bn.

"As we reach the point of delivering on the millennium targets it is time to look further ahead and to set some fresh goals to sustain the impetus for change and growth," Mr Browne said.

Over a five-year period BP expects to grow gross capital expenditure to around £4.5bn, he said. "At the same time we'll continue a steady programme

of divestments, selling assets which are not sufficiently competitive," he added.

The delay to the ethylene-making plant on the Indonesian island of Java is a blow to the nation's plan to expand its chemical industry.

A spokeswoman for BP said the Asian financial slowdown has forced BP and its partners to delay financing plans and that they won't move forward with the plant until markets stabilize.

Chancellor calls for new IMF watchdog

By Diane Coyle

IMPROVING the international response to financial crises was the focus of attention for ministers and bankers at the IMF and World Bank meetings in Washington yesterday.

Gordon Brown, Chancellor of the Exchequer, called for the IMF and World Bank to create a new, joint department to oversee the financial system in member countries. It should co-operate with national regulators and other bodies such as the Bank for International Settlements, he told a meeting of the Fund's interim, or management, committee.

Mr Brown said greater transparency on the part of individual countries about their financial systems and procedures was also necessary.

"Greater openness in procedures as well as the dissemination of information will provide markets with a better understanding," he said. This would reduce the likelihood of financial market crises and improve policies.

The Chancellor's call for improvements was backed by a separate meeting of G10 countries - a group of smaller industrialised countries. Its communiqué said the IMF should continue to play a central role in crisis prevention, and supported the need for greater transparency and disclosure.

"Ministers and governors noted that the crisis in Asia had underscored the importance of strengthening financial systems in emerging market economies," it said.

In the aftermath of the Mexican crisis in late 1994 the IMF introduced improvements in its publication of economic statistics, making more information about member economies freely available on the

internet. Some countries have also agreed to the publication of summaries of their annual "Article Four" consultations with the IMF on a voluntary basis.

A consensus in favour of improving financial and banking information as well as emerging during the meetings in Washington this week, but the exact shape any reforms take will emerge only slowly, given the normal pace of change at the Fund. More radical plans to redraw the "international financial architecture" will move at an even more glacial pace.

The IMF is close to producing a code of good practice on fiscal transparency, first proposed by Mr Brown at its annual meeting last September.

The Chancellor said yesterday this should be extended by a code of good practice on monetary and financial policy. He said more countries should be encouraged to publish the results of their discussions with the IMF. The Fund itself should also become more open and accountable.

The IMF has been under fire this week for its lack of accountability, and particularly for failing to take account of the social impact of the policies it has imposed on the troubled South-east Asian countries.

Development organisations have also criticised it for delaying planned debt relief for the world's poorest countries. A new report from Oxfam claims the high-profile debt relief initiative has been a failure, with only three countries likely to have seen any material reduction in their interest payments by the end of this year.

Ministers from developing countries called on Wednesday for the IMF, World Bank and G7 to accelerate the pace of debt relief to those countries which had undertaken tough economic reforms.

Why the world's poor like mobiles

By Mary Dejevsky and Diane Coyle

PEOPLE in developing countries are healthier, better fed, more educated - and using mobile phones more than ever before.

This year's annual economic and social snapshot of the planet from the World Bank shows that many poorer countries have made huge strides in improving the quality of life for their inhabitants. Intriguingly, one of the most pronounced trends has been the spread of mobile phones in order to get around inadequate and expensive phone systems.

For example, while a three-minute telephone call to the US costs an average of US\$3.27 (£1.93) in high-income countries, it costs US\$10.86 (£6.42) from a low-income country. Waiting times to get a conventional telephone installed can also be very long indeed - more than 10 years in Tanzania and Sierra Leone, for example, and an average of five years in low-income countries.

Joseph Stiglitz, senior vice-president and chief economist of the World Bank, said that the spread of mobile phones and the fact that they accounted for a larger proportion of phones in some developing countries than fixed phones had wide implications.

"It has speeded up access to phones for people, especially in very remote areas, who would otherwise have to wait years for someone to build them a line," he said. It had also accelerated the fall in telecoms costs and charges, with great potential for education and "telemedicine" to penetrate areas that had hitherto been beyond reach of conventional communications.

The new report, "World Development Indicators 1998", warns that despite the encouraging improvements in the latest year, progress in developing countries has been uneven. For example, mortality rates in sub-Saharan Africa are higher now than they were 25 years ago in East Asia. And in much of South Asia discrimination means women are not faring as well as men.

It warned that global water supplies were a third lower than a quarter of a century ago, while population increases during the next 25 years would increase demand for water by more than 65 per cent. The Bank predicted that 52 countries with a combined population of more than 3 billion people would be suffering water shortages by 2025.

Italian link-up for Westland helicopters

By Peter Thal Larsen

THE FIRST cross-border defence merger in Europe moved closer yesterday when GKN, the engineering group, and Finmeccanica, the Italian defence firm, announced that they were in exclusive negotiations about merging their helicopter divisions.

The two companies have signed a memorandum of understanding to merge Westland, the British helicopter firm and Augusta, its Italian rival, in an "alliance of equals".

The merger, which would create the world's second largest helicopter firm with a total order book of US\$8.5bn (£5bn), is not expected to be completed until early next year.

The move is a significant step forward in the consolidation of the European defence industry, which has failed to match a flurry of billion-dollar deals in the US. Although the French, German and British governments have called on their respective defence firms to come together, progress has been slow.

The Westland-Augusta deal is understood to have the blessing of both the Italian and British governments, though negotiations were initiated by the companies themselves. The two sides had been in discussions for about six months before yesterday's announcement.

The news is a coup for GKN. Eurocopter, the helicopter joint venture between France's Aerospatiale and Germany's Daimler-Benz Aerospace, had also been courting Finmeccanica, which is 60 per cent owned by the Italian government.

However, the lack of overlap between August and Westland's models is believed to have helped seal the deal. The two companies already work together as partners on the EH101 naval patrol helicopter.

Richard Case, chief executive of Westland, said the merger was not likely to lead to serious job losses. The two companies, which employ almost 9,000 people, are both actively recruiting in an attempt to complete orders.

"There will be reshaping because we will not want to have an overlap of jobs," said Mr Case. "But I don't believe there will be substantial job losses."

He said it was too early to say whether the combined entity would provide the basis for further consolidation in Europe. "We will be number two sitting behind Boeing," he said. "It's then possible to decide whether we pursue the European objective or look at the US."

Telewest in £649m merger

By Peter Thal Larsen

STEPHEN Davidson, chief executive of Telewest, is to leave the cable operator following its decision to merge with General Cable, the rival cable group, after just one year in charge.

Mr Davidson was appointed chief executive in February 1997, having spent four and a half years as finance director.

"He's done his bit," a Telewest spokesman said. "He took the company through the flotation and has turned its focus onto the customers."

Mr Davidson, who was on a 12-month rolling contract, is expected to receive a payoff of about £300,000, equivalent to one year's salary. Telewest has started searching for a new chief executive, who will be recruited from outside the company. Dick van Valkenburg, Telewest's chief operating officer, will run the company until a replacement is found.

The news emerged as Telewest announced the final details of its long-awaited merger with rival General Cable. The £649m deal will create the largest cable operator in the UK, with franchises covering 5.8 million homes. The combined entity will have 849,000 cable television customers and operate 1.1m residential and 167,000

business telephone lines.

Telewest will offer 1.243 new Telewest shares and 65p in cash for every General Cable share, valuing each General Cable share at approximately 175p. Telewest shares dropped 3.5p to 85.5p, while General Cable shares jumped 8p to 165p.

The move is a response by Telewest to other mergers in the industry. Last year three other cable groups and Mercury, the long-distance and mobile phone operator, merged to form Cable & Wireless Communications. Earlier this year NTL had also been courting General Cable, but lost out when Generale des Eaux, the French utility which owns 40.2 per cent of General Cable, decided to enter into exclusive negotiations with Telewest.

The cash part of the deal will be funded by an open offer of 261m new Telewest shares at a price of 92.5p per share, which will be taken up by Telewest's corporate shareholders, which include the US groups US West, TCI and Cox.

Following the merger US West, TCI, Cox, SBC and Generale des Eaux will control about 73 per cent of the company, with the remainder of the shares in the hands of private investors in London and the US.

World Bank social trends				
Region	Infant mortality per 1,000 live births		Under-five mortality per 1,000 live births	
	1970	1996	1980	1996
East Asia and the Pacific	77	38	77	40
Europe and Central Asia	24	30	100	
Latin America and the Caribbean	84	33	82	34
Middle East and North Africa	134	50	141	63
South Asia	138	79	174	99
Sub-Saharan Africa	137	91	193	147

Yesterday in the markets

STOCK MARKETS

Index	Close	Change	Change (%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	6002.00	-72.10	-1.19	6150.50	4290.20	3.85
FTSE 250	5526.80	-32.20	-0.58	5600.00	4284.20	2.98
FTSE 350	2880.70	-29.00	-1.00	2938.70	2110.30	3.26
FTSE All Share	2907.68	-26.95	-0.92	2981.12	2087.48	3.25
FTSE SmallCap	2630.20	-1.20	-0.04	2641.40	2182.10	2.87
FTSE AIM	1068.50	-1.80	-0.17	1115.30	1225.20	3.24
FTSE Europe	2630.20	-1.20	-0.04	2641.40	2182.10	2.87
FTSE Asia	1068.50	-1.80	-0.17	1115.30	1225.20	3.24
Dow Jones	9087.28	-64.32	-0.70	9162.27	8558.66	1.54
Nikkei	15083.77	-415.53	-2.75	15910.79	14488.21	0.50
Hong Kong	11187.78	-183.28	-1.61	11820.81	7909.13	3.30
Wall St	5324.14	-84.33	-1.59	5411.07	3325.01	1.52

INTEREST RATES

Short sterling				
1 month	7.52	1.10	1.50	0.50
3 month	5.88	-0.16	5.84	-0.56
6 month	5.88	-0.16	5.84	-0.56
1 year	5.88	-0.16	5.84	-0.56

UK 10 year gilt				
1 year	5.88	-0.16	5.84	-0.56
3 month	5.88	-0.16	5.84	-0.56
6 month	5.88	-0.16	5.84	-0.56
1 year	5.88	-0.16	5.84	-0.56

US long bond				
1 year	5.88	-0.16	5.84	-0.56
3 month	5.88	-0.16	5.84	-0.56
6 month	5.88	-0.16	5.84	-0.56
1 year	5.88	-0.16	5.84	-0.56

Money Market Rates				
1 month	5.88	-0.16	5.84	-0.56
3 month	5.88	-0.16	5.84	-0.56
6 month	5.88	-0.16	5.84	-0.56
1 year	5.88	-0.16	5.84	-0.56

MAIN PRICE CHANGES				
First Leisure	367.00	30.00	8.50	
Sainsbury	1205.00	65.00	5.50	
Smiths	207.50	11.00	5.50	
John Lewis	4165.00	8.00	5.10	

CURRENCIES

\$/£				
at 5pm	1.6915	+0.0002	1.6244	
at 5pm	1.6915	+0.0002	1.6244	
at 5pm	1.6915	+0.0002	1.6244	
at 5pm	1.6915	+0.0002	1.6244	

DM/£				
at 5pm	0.5912	-0.0002	0.6156	
at 5pm	0.5912	-0.0002	0.6156	
at 5pm	0.5912	-0.0002	0.6156	
at 5pm	0.5912	-0.0002	0.6156	

¥/£				
at 5pm	137.0	-1.7	17.61	
at 5pm	137.0	-1.7	17.61	
at 5pm	137.0	-1.7	17.61	
at 5pm	137.0	-1.7	17.61	

Pound				
at 5pm	1.6915	+0.0002	1.6244	
at 5pm	1.6915	+0.0002	1.6244	
at 5pm	1.6915	+0.0002	1.6244	
at 5pm	1.6915	+0.0002	1.6244	

Dollar				
at 5pm	0.5912	-0.0002	0.6156	
at 5pm	0.5912	-0.0002	0.6156	
at 5pm	0.5912	-0.0002	0.6156	
at 5pm	0.5912	-0.0002	0.6156	

Other Indicators				
at 5pm	137.0	-1.7	17.61	
at 5pm	137.0	-1.7	17.61	
at 5pm	137.0	-1.7	17.61	
at 5pm	137.0	-1.7	17.61	

TOURIST RATES

Australia (\$)	2.5009	Malta (lira)	0.6372
Austria (schilling)	20.73	Mexican (nuevo peso)	12.93
Belgium (franc)	80.87	Netherlands (guilder)	3.3226
Canada (\$)	2.3586	New Zealand (\$)	2.9361
Cyprus (pounds)	0.6596	Norway (krone)	12.57
Denmark (krone)	11.33	Portugal (escudo)	209.80
Finland (markka)	9.0241	Saudi Arabia (riyal)	6.1284
France (franc)	9.8954	Singapore (S)	2.5628
Germany (mark)	2.9608	Spain (peseta)	249.88
Greece (drachma)	510.07	South Africa (rand)	8.1859
Hong Kong (\$)	12.64	Sweden (krona)	12.80
Ireland (punt)	1.1680	Switzerland (franc)	2.4663
India (rupee)	61.38	Thailand (baht)	60.68
Israel (shekel)	5.7777	Turkey (lira)	398.181
Italy (lira)	2932	USA (\$)	1.6429
Japan (yen)	218.58		
Malaysia (ringgit)	5.9351		

Rates for indication purposes only
Source: Thomas Cook

Blackpool's tower a target

By Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

SOME of Britain's best-known seaside attractions such as the Blackpool Tower and Eastbourne pier could be sold under plans being considered by First Leisure, the bingo to bars leisure group led by Michael Grade.

The company said yesterday that it had received a number of unsolicited approaches for its resorts division which includes the two landmark tourist attractions as well as Llandudno pier in north Wales.

First Leisure stressed that the talks are at an early stage and that no firm offers have been tabled. Analysts suggested the division could fetch around £120m. They said buyers could include venture capital groups or a management buy-out.

The Blackpool Tower was built over a century ago and modelled on the Eiffel Tower in Paris. Eastbourne pier opened in 1886 and was recently refurbished to include a new wine bar, restaurant and amusement area.

First Leisure acquired the Tower and the other attractions when it bought the resorts division 16 years ago but it is thought the company now wants to concentrate on nightclubs, health

clubs and bowling. It has already disposed of its bingo division after a £38m management buy-out three months ago.

There has been speculation that the decision to consider selling the resorts is linked to the Labour Party dropping the Winter Gardens as a conference venue in favour of Brighton.

More than a million people visit Blackpool Tower every year and it boasts a top 10 popularity among Britain's fee-paying attractions. It contains themed areas such as insect exhibition Bugworld, an aquarium and model dinosaurs and the famous ballroom complete with organ in the basement.

First Leisure's statement helped to boost the company's share price by 30p to 367p. The stock was given a further lift when Dresner Kleinwort Benson upgraded its recommendation on the shares to 'buy'.

First Leisure has been the subject of intense criticism in recent weeks over a controversial pay package that could see Mr Grade earn £4.5m over four years. The pay deal prompted almost 45 per cent of shareholders to vote against the re-election of three non-executive directors. Two new non-executives are to be appointed to placate investors.

Safeway rolls out a better loyalty card

By Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

SAFeway, the supermarket group which has been losing ground to its rivals, increased the stakes in the loyalty card battle yesterday when it unveiled a £20m package of improvements to its ABC card.

Shoppers spending upwards of £160 a month at Safeway will now be entitled to double points on their ABC card and those spending over £240 will qualify for triple points the following month.

Safeway said the initiative would increase incentives for shoppers to remain loyal and use the stores for their main shop rather than for top-up purchases. It said the average



Crushing response: Colin Smith, chief executive, fights back with some shoppers getting triple points on their loyalty card

family spends more than £60 a week on groceries, meaning most families stood to benefit from the higher rewards if they shopped regularly at the store.

"We're breaking ranks as we want to make it even more rewarding for customers to spend more with Safeway - so the more you spend, the higher the reward," said chief executive Colin Smith.

Safeway plans to support the initiative with a big television and press campaign. Shoppers currently get one point for every pound spent at Safeway. They can redeem their points through discounts on purchases, free products, in-store services, family offers or

donations to charity. Analysts said the move showed Safeway was still striving to revive sales momentum, which has not matched the industry trend. Tesco and Sainsbury's also operate loyalty

cards though Asda has decided not to launch one nationally. Safeway's recent problems have made it the subject of speculation with Asda seen as the most likely bidder. Safeway shares were unchanged at 364p

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY PETER THAL LARSEN

Premier is still struggling

FOR a lesson in how acquisitions can go wrong, look no further than Premier Farnell. Back in 1996, Farnell, which was then an electronic components distributor with an enviable track record, paid £1.8bn for Premier, a similar business in the US. Two years and two profit warnings later Premier Farnell, as the business is now called, is worth just £1bn.

This is value destruction on a heroic scale and the man responsible - chief executive Howard Poulson - was rightly pushed out last January. What's more, the company is still destroying value. By its own admission, Premier Farnell currently earns just half the return on equity it needs to cover its cost of capital, which is about 11 per cent.

But, as the investment gurus are fond of pointing out, the past is no guide to the future and every share is worth buying if it's cheap enough. The question for investors is whether Premier Farnell is a recovery story waiting to happen.

On the evidence of yesterday's full year results, which showed pre-tax profits in line with the company's January forecast of £139m, there is still plenty of reason to be cautious. Growth figures are pedestrian; adjusted for currencies and various other one-off items, sales grew by a pedestrian 0.6 per cent. Spending on computer systems and start-up costs for new catalogues mean that profit growth was not much better.

Despite the lavish promises made at the time of the merger, of the benefits that could be squeezed from cross-selling the two companies' product ranges, Premier Farnell admits that there is still a lot to be done. And Morton Mandel, the Premier boss who made a packet from the takeover and is running the merged company until a new chief executive is found, is reluctant to promise any tangible benefits in the near future.

So, for the time being, Premier Farnell will manage no more than pedestrian growth. Analysts are pencilling in profit figures of just £145m, placing the shares, which fell 1p to 368p yesterday, on a forward p/e ratio of about 14. Given the continuing risks, steer clear.

Albert Fisher in a mire

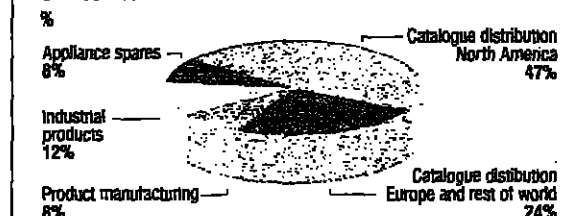
STEPHEN WALLS may have stepped down to become non-executive chairman at Albert Fisher, the poorly performing fruit and vegetable group, but

Premier Farnell: At a glance

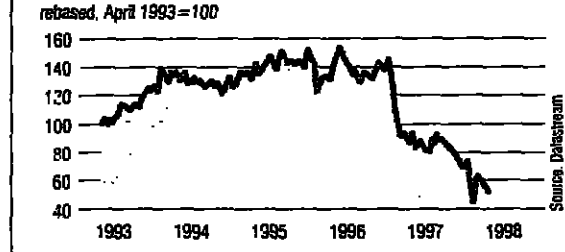
Market value: £999m, share price 368 (-1p)

Five-year record	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Turnover (£m)	320	514	539	983	744
Pre-tax profits (£m)	49	59	111	173	139
Earnings per share (p)	23.2	27.3	54.8	36.5	25.3
Dividends per share (p)	7.0	8.6	10.3	12.0	12.9

Turnover



Premier Farnell vs FT Allshare



the stock market will not remember him kindly. After much bluster and promises to move the group away from the commodity end of the business, he leaves the company with a series of low-margin businesses, still at the risk of the weather and crop disease.

The shares have been an appalling investment. In the past year they have underperformed the market by 50 per cent. Last year a mystery bidder came and went and a plan to sell the problematic seafood operations fell through.

Shareholders are left with a mess. The group recorded a pre-tax loss of £23m after exceptional charges of £35m in the six months to February. Management now intends to keep most of the seafood operations, though the US seafood interests will be sold.

The most surprising aspect of yesterday's results was the decision to maintain the dividend. A cut had been expected and is already factored into the share price so management is not getting any credit for its actions. Albert Fisher is now paying out more in dividends than it is earning and one can only imagine that the payout will be cut later in the year.

Neil England, who joined as chief executive last year, wants to improve margins and build leading businesses in sectors such as fresh fruit, prepared salads and sauces. But this sounds horribly familiar.

around. On a forward p/e ratio of just 8 the shares are not worth selling, so hang on and hope for a bid.

Caverdale bikes ahead

IT HAS been a landmark year for Caverdale, the motors and accessories group. It sold its motor dealerships to Quicks for £46m in November and returned £10m to shareholders. With the car dealerships gone the company is a much smaller entity focused on its industrial products and leisure businesses which it says offer higher margins and greater growth opportunities.

This is borne out by last year's full year results which show operating profits on continuing operations rising by 76 per cent to £3m.

The industrial products business essentially sells industrial parts to the motor trade, local authorities and farmers. It's not a business to set the blood racing, but is meant to provide the ballast to Caverdale's real growth area - the sale of motorcycle and bicycle accessories.

Caverdale has four motorcycle accessory stores and plans a further 10 this year. It already has a successful mail order operation. Completing the picture is a Raleigh bicycle and parts distributor acquired in November, and the recently acquired XM Group which makes and distributes marine products.

The shares closed up 4p yesterday at 149.5p. On full year profit forecasts of £5m the shares trade on a forward rating of 13. About right.

Liffe members vote on changes

By Lea Patterson

THE 220 members of Liffe, London's financial futures and options exchange, met last night to vote on plans to cut down the exchange's unwieldy board and refocus its much criticised management. Last night's extraordinary general meeting was the first concrete step taken by Liffe management to resolve the crisis that has recently engulfed the exchange.

Founded in 1982, Liffe quickly grew to become the second largest futures exchange in the world. For years, Liffe, which enthusiastically embraced the "open outcry" trading methods pioneered in Chicago, was widely regarded as the cutting edge of the world's financial exchanges. "It was innovative and imaginative - a great place to be part of," said one Liffe trader.

Over the last year, though, things have taken a marked turn for the worse. Liffe has lost market share at a remarkable rate to the Deutsche Terminbörse (DTB), Germany's rival exchange which has launched an aggressive and audacious attack on Liffe. In a matter of months, the DTB cut Liffe's share of the prestigious German Bund futures market by more than half. At the moment, the DTB has a 70 per cent share of the Bund, and its share is rising all the time. It marks a dramatic reversal of fortunes for the two exchanges. Only a year ago Liffe had a 70 per cent share of trade in the Bund. DTB's share was 30 per cent.

Liffe's members have been up in arms at what they regard as the failure of the exchange's management to respond to competition from DTB's electronic screen-based system. Following sustained criticism from its membership over the last few months, Liffe's board finally came up with a series of proposals designed to safeguard the exchange's future.

Liffe members are to vote on these proposals at two egms. The first, held last night, covers the structure of the board. Liffe is proposing a reduction in the number of board members - currently there are 24 - and the appointment of a full-time chairman. Jack Wigglesworth, the current part-time chairman, is expected to stand down next month.

At the second egm, which will be held next month, Liffe members will discuss the thorny issue of its ownership structure, which could lead to a radical rethink of Liffe's mutual status. The board is also proposing that the exchange introduce electronic trading. It is intended the electronic system will run in parallel with the more traditional open outcry method.

Liffe members attribute the exchange's recent decline to a combination of factors, including the inflexibility of the management, the initial reluctance of Liffe to embrace electronic trading and vested interests that lie with London's futures exchange.

One Liffe trader said: "A number of people - mainly the institutions - saw the electronic screen trading coming. But Liffe's unwieldy board, together with the vested interests of certain parts of the membership, made it impossible for us to make decisions."

The vested interests referred to were members of the "local" community - individuals who speculate on Liffe with their own money. Locals currently account for around 30 per cent of Liffe's volumes.

One trader with a major institution said many local traders were desperate to maintain open outcry. "They [the locals] perceive that with open outcry they have an advantage over traders elsewhere in the world."

"It is certainly the case that most locals will be staying with open outcry for as long as possible," admitted one local trader.

Not all locals, though, are supporters of the status quo. A few prominent locals have been among the most vociferous critics of the exchange. David Mattimore, a veteran open outcry trader recently honoured by Liffe for the volume of Bunds he traded at the exchange, is among those who have switched sides and now trades with the DTB.

David Kite, the Liffe board member who resigned last month in a dispute over members' fees, has also been a fierce critic of the management. At the time of his

resignation, he said: "The chairman and chief executive remind me of the captain and chief engineer on the Titanic thinking their ship is unsinkable. Gentlemen, the iceberg is just around the corner."

But it is wrong to say Liffe has been completely defeated by the Germans. Its open outcry system still has a significant advantage over electronic dealing when it comes to the more complex transactions such as the Eurodollar, now the most popular contract at Liffe.

One trader explained: "There are only four trading strategies you can use with a Bund. Other contracts, such as the Eurodollar, are far more complex. You need an incredibly sophisticated electronic system if a trader is going to be able to do as many things with the screens as he can with open outcry."

Recent market share figures seem to bear testimony to Liffe's advantage in these more complex transactions. Last month Liffe's volume of trades in three month Eurodollar contracts was more than 100 times greater than DTB's.

If Liffe is to survive, according to the trader, the board needs to be slimmed down, it needs to adopt electronic trading and it needs to change its membership structure. Although many traders approve of the proposals on board structure and electronic trading, a significant proportion feel the management has not gone far enough.

In particular, numerous members believe the exchange must consider a merger - possibly with arch-rival DTB - if it is to remain a significant player in the world's financial markets. So far, Liffe has ruled out such a move.



Open outcry: The trading methods at Liffe give it an advantage with some contracts, but electronic trading looks likely to be introduced as well

Aegis stake for sale

VENTURE capital groups and family shareholders have put a 42.5 per cent stake in Aegis, the media buyer, up for sale. The company said Warburg, Pincus Investors, Electra Private Equity Partners and the Gross family will sell up to 353 million shares.

Aegis also said it started 1998 with "good momentum", and that results in the first two months are running ahead of 1997 and ahead of objectives. Cazenove & Co is acting as lead manager and sole book runner, while Hoare Govett Corporate Finance Limited is acting as co-lead manager for the offering.

Wace sells

WACE, the troubled printing group, is selling four of its divisions to its management in a £53m deal backed by Electra Fleming, the venture capitalists. The buy-out team is being led by Brian Dudley, formerly chief executive of Regus and the new group is planning to make further acquisitions in the industry. Together, the four made operating profits of £4.2m on sales of £78.2m. Wace unveiled a loss of £10.3m for 1997 compared with a profit of £11.9m in the previous year.

El Nino strikes

ALBERT FISHER, the underperforming fruit and vegetable group that was the subject of an aborted takeover approach last year, has reported half year pre-tax losses of £23m after £35m of exceptional charges. These included £4m of fees related to the failed sale of the seafood business and a £17m goodwill write off relating to the Roem Dutch seafood operations. The strong pound and the effects of the El Nino weather phenomenon affected trading. However, the company said it expects a better performance in the second half.

Fii steps west

FII, the footwear group which supplies Marks & Spencer, is closing down its factory in Northampton with the loss of 110 jobs. Continued pressure on prices which has eroded margins has forced the group to move production to Bridgend in Wales.

Boardroom salaries are booming

FRESH evidence emerged yesterday that boardroom salaries are booming after several groups revealed a sharp rise in directors' pay packets last year.

Howard Dyer, chairman of Ascot Holdings, the engineer, saw his total pay rise more than 65 per cent last year to £683,000. He received a bonus of £164,000 on top of a basic salary of £353,000.

The group's annual report also reveals that Mike Vincent,

who resigned as a director of last September, received a payoff of £22,000. He also made a profit of £272,000 from selling share options.

John Grant, Ascot's new chief executive and finance director and former finance director of LucasVarity, who was appointed last July, received £252,000 for less than six months' work.

Sir Ralph Robins, chairman of Rolls Royce, the engineering giant, received a pay rise of

almost 40 per cent last year. He was paid a total of £550,000 including a bonus of £160,000.

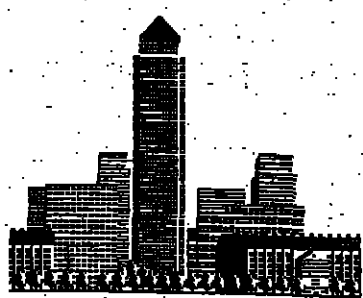
John Rose, chief executive of the group, also saw his pay jump from £314,000 to £471,000. Rolls Royce's total boardroom wage bill increased by 36 per cent to £3.2m.

Meanwhile Alan Enson received £200,000 on leaving IML, the engineering group, on top of a total pay package of £245,000.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Davidson Healthcare (F)	3.87m (1.73m)	0.120m (0.50m)	0.63p (0.33p)	nil (-)
Caverdale (F)	351.5m (245.8m)	4.3m (5.4m)	12.4p (16.3p)	4.0p (-)
Chapman Racecourse (F)	122.21m (2.18m)	0.403m (0.278m)	90.4p (48.5p)	1.0p (0.0p)
Donatostella (F)	10.23m (8.23m)	1.74m (0.63m)	8.2p (2.5p)	2.25p (-)
Albert Fisher (F)	619.8m (668.9m)	-22.8m (19.1m)	-3.63p (1.97p)	1.85p (1.85p)
General Cable (F)	111.85m (55.7m)	-88.95m (-29.80m)	-22.8p (-8.6p)	nil (-)
Intel Energy Group (F)	81.70m (72.24m)	7.34m (6.58m)	10.58p (8.26p)	4.7p (4.45p)
Jumex International (F)	345.8m (83.2m)	-341.2m (-765.9m)	-4.9p (-14.3p)	nil (-)
Premier Farnell (F)	743.5m (882.6m)	139.0m (173.0m)	25.3p (36.5p)	12.5p (12.0p)
Sainsbury Shopping (F)	8.90m (6.60m)	-3.00m (1.78m)	-31.78p (15.8p)	3.4p (-)
Wace Group (F)	288.5m (323.1m)	-78.4m (-2.04m)	100.1p (8.4p)	nil (-)

(F) - Final; (-) - Interim



OUTLOOK ON GERRY ROBINSON'S UNCOMFORTABLE POSITION WITH BSKYB AND BDB, DIFFICULT TIMES FOR MFI, AND THE FRENCH BID FOR MORE GROUP

Granada can't keep a foot in both TV camps

RIDING two horses at the same time is never easy. When they both happen to be in the self-obsessed, ego-driven world of TV and media, it gets that much more difficult still. Nonetheless, Gerry Robinson, chairman of Granada, reckons he can keep up the circus act a while longer yet.

As a major shareholder and chairman of the board, he still has one foot firmly planted on the back of the ageing but still high-performance BSKYB. The other foot is meanwhile planted equally firmly on the back of that promising young thoroughbred, British Digital Broadcasting, where he is a 50/50 shareholder with Carlton.

In theory, the two should be getting along just fine. Sky has a powerful interest in BDB's future success through a five year programming agreement, while BDB admits that without this programming, it won't have much of a product to launch on its digital terrestrial platform this autumn. For the time being, then, the two are irrevocably harnessed together at the head.

Despite this, the writs seem to be flying between the two like confetti. First Sky sued Carlton for failure to pay up agreed compensation for its equity in BDB. Meanwhile, Michael Green of Carlton has been conducting a very public row with his opposite number at Sky, Mark Booth, about who is going to be liable for the extra costs of running Sky's premier football league rights across BDB's terrestrial platform.

Finally, he was yesterday subjected to the bizarre spectacle of Sky suing BDB over the set-top boxes which will allow customer access to BDB's channels. In

essence Mr Robinson has sued himself. Presumably all this is never going to come to court. The hurried and somewhat embarrassed way in which arrangements were being made last night for the two sides to sit down and talk it all out indicates that Granada is belatedly trying to knock heads together.

Even so, it is worth asking what lies behind this public scrap, and further, whether given all this bad blood, Granada can hope to continue to stay astride both steeds. At the insistence of the Government, the set-top boxes being used by the three digital platforms - satellite, terrestrial and cable - to unscramble the signal are meant to be fully compatible one with another, the point being that the consumer who wants more than one platform won't have to buy more than one box. This stipulation was contractually reinforced by Sky when it signed its programming agreement with BDB.

Now BDB is planning to go live with a box which although largely compatible seems not to be wholly so. With a bit of luck it should be capable of unscrambling Sky's digital channels (so in that sense it won't be like the famous battle to the death between the rival video technologies of Betamax and VHS), but it will not be able to carry Sky's electronic programme guide, allowing the consumer to navigate his way around the 200 planned channels. Foul, cries Sky. This may look like a storm in a tea cup, but there is a real and significant sub-text. If BDB works out, it will one day provide serious head-to-head competition for Sky, for audience and rights alike.

Long-term, then, it is in Sky's interests to see BDB fail. Certainly there is no harm for Sky in forcing up BDB's cost of entry in the meantime, by requiring it to upgrade its box to full compatibility. Some fancy valuations are already being put on BDB in the City, but its success is by no means assured. While that remains the case, it plainly makes sense for Granada to hedge its bets by riding both horses. But for how much longer will that be possible? The situation is already uncomfortable. One or other, Sky or BDB, is eventually going to tell Granada where to get off.

Some retail flair needed at MFI

THESE ARE difficult times for MFI, the company whose self-assembly furniture has outwitted many a DIY enthusiast. The kitchens and bedrooms group treated investors to a profits warning last month, now the group's major investors are pruning their stakes and getting restless about the board's stewardship.

A minor boardroom reshuffle last week has failed to satisfy disgruntled investors, and it is becoming apparent that only the head of either the chairman Derek Hunt, or his chief executive John Randall, or both, will do.

Investors certainly have a right to be angry. Messrs Hunt and Randall bought MFI from Asda in a management buy-out in 1987, and made a big turn when they brought the company back to the market in 1992. The flotation priced the shares

at 115p each. Now they are worth just 93p, valuing the company at only £550m. It is a dismal story.

MFI has a strong market position in kitchens - more than 10 per cent - but its franchise has been eroded by cheap and cheerful operators like Ikea. Management responded by converting stores to the HomeWorks format, which includes more soft furnishings, pots and pans and so on. Unfortunately, costs have been rising as fast as sales and some lines, such as upholstery, are now having to be taken out. A new warehouse system has resulted in some doubling up in costs and a degree of disruption. And on top of this the market has turned against retailers of big ticket items.

There are other issues too. One is vertical integration. MFI makes much of the supposed virtues of being both a manufacturer and a retailer but doesn't seem to be able to reap the benefits. Few retailers manage to combine the two disciplines effectively. Just ask Laura Ashley and British Shoe. However, MFI cannot demerge its Hygena manufacturing division as it too closely integrated; Hygena doesn't make kitchens for anyone else.

But perhaps management is the key here. Derek Hunt, a former policeman, joined MFI in 1972, while John Randall followed in 1978. Like the former Argos team, they have been there too long. Investors are right to wonder whether new blood and an injection of retail flair might breathe new life into a format that needs it badly. A good chairman, like a good footballer, always knows when to

hang up his boots. Unfortunately, Mr Hunt seems to be taking his time in getting the message.

Rearranging the street furniture

JEAN-FRANCOIS Deceux may need all the free bus pagers and superloos he can muster to get his £475m bid for More Group through the Office of Fair Trading. More Group is one of Britain's largest outdoor (or poster) advertising companies with about 20 per cent of the market. Mr Deceux is big in France, but he's got just 3 per cent of the market here. So on the face of it, there's not much of a case to answer.

The question is whether poster advertising on "street furniture" (bus stops to you and me), constitutes a separate and distinct market. Here, the French pretender has a much higher share. Together with More Group, it would be overwhelming, at more than 90 per cent. Mr Deceux insists that these are not separate markets. He may be right about this but he wouldn't be saying the same thing back home in France, where big advertising boards are banned from all city centres. The effect is to confine the market for outdoor advertising in city centres to street furniture. For the time being, there's no such distinction in Britain, but who knows, those obliging chaps in Brussels might eventually be prevailed upon to harmonise the rest of Europe with French practice on this front too. Crafty stuff.

Evidence against banks irrefutable, says lawyer

By Lea Paterson

THE LAWYER representing four clients who are suing Barclays Bank for £300bn (£120bn) has said he has "irrefutable evidence" that the bank illegally confiscated client assets.

In a letter to the director of the Swiss Federal Banking Commission, Carey Portman urged the Swiss Banking Commission to block the proposed merger of the Union Bank of Switzerland (UBS) and the Swiss Bank Corporation (SBC).

Mr Portman has also claimed the Swiss banks "prolonged World War II and used

Rivals try to settle digital TV dispute

By Peter Thal Larsen

BSKYB, which will start broadcasting 200 digital channels via satellite in June, has issued a writ against BDB, which is planning to launch a 30-channel service in the autumn. The writ claims that BDB's set-top box is not compatible with BSKYB's box, breaking an agreement between the two companies.

BSKYB and BDB have agreed that the boxes should be "inter-operable" - that viewers should be able to receive either service regardless of which box they buy. However, the two companies disagree over

TSB row simmers on

By Lea Paterson

THE simmering row between Lloyds TSB, the UK's largest bank, and the TSB Hill Samuel Action Group over the fate of the TSB's surplus pension fund is set to go all the way to the House of Commons.

Talks between the two sides broke down yesterday after a "very disappointing" meeting between Lloyds management and the lobby group. A full House of Commons debate on the Bill which could finally put the seal on the merger of Lloyds and TSB now seems inevitable.

Gerald Howarth, one of three MPs who formally opposed

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Interest rate fears put the brake on equities

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

FEARS of higher interest rates reined back equities. Worries that the Monetary Policy Committee will have little option but to accept the argument of the banks unsettled the stock market and Footsie suffered its third reverse in a row - off 72.1 points at 6,002. It was the biggest fall for five weeks.

There was also uncertainty about German rates - the Bundesbank decides today - and concern about weak Asian markets. A difficult opening few hours in New York was another inhibiting influence. But selling was light, with losses among the hitherto high-flying financials doing much of the Footsie damage.

Lloyds TSB led the retreat. In busy trading the shares fell 83p to 995p as some of the takeover enthusiasm which has swept the shares higher in the past two weeks evaporated and SBC Warburg trimmed its profits forecasts and took the shares

off its buy list. Schroders was another to feel the chill wind of doubt. The voting shares dropped 98p to 2,900p and the non-voters 130p to 2,480p. There was talk that some of the Schroders-related funds had decided the shares had stretched too far into the stratosphere and had decided to lock in some profits.

Others hit by moderate profit-taking rather than any belief the financial bubble had burst included HSBC, off 91p to 1,900p, and Standard Chartered, 35p to 1,004p. The rout also embraced National Westminster Bank (30p to 1,173p); Norwich Union (13.25p to 465p) and Halifax (17p to 871p).

For once engineers and miners headed the Footsie leader board. RioTinto improved 28p to 832p on Dredger Kleinwort Benson support. The investment house set a 900p target, saying the recent recovery in metal prices had not yet fil-

tered through to the shares. GKN responded to its Italian alliance with a 32p advance to 1,635p and Stebe rose 27p to 1,272p. Williams, the security group, jumped 14p to 470p after AXA Sun Life disclosed it had lifted its stake by more than one percentage point to just over 5 per cent.

Carpetright edged ahead 5p to 370p as chairman Lord Harris took advantage of the downturn in price, buying 100,000 shares at 363p, and Great Universal Stores put on 11.5p to 828.5p, indicating it could be on its way to victory in the fierce battle for Argos. Little changed at 635p. MFI fell 3.5p to 93p.

First Leisure Corporation jumped 30p to 367p on the possible sale of its seaside activities.

The mid and small cap indices gave ground and the general lacklustre atmosphere swirled though the computer sector, although Sage rallied 85p to 1,205p, helped along by

a DKB target price of 1,450p. General Cable rose 8p to 165p following the £69m bid from Telewest Communications, off 3.5p to 85.5p.

Newcomers survived the rather unfriendly environment. Ottakar's, the books retailer, enjoyed a strong opening chapter to quoted life, closing at 203.5p from its 153p placing. Without a dom-

inant shareholder, it is seen as likely fodder for a predator. Oxford Glycolines placed at 280p ended at 286.5p.

Voss Net, suspended at 155p when its nominated adviser quit, returned at 132.5p after Butterfield took on the role of adviser and stockbroker to the AIM-traded information group.

Toad, the car security group suspended at 31.5p last month, should return to market today. The company acquired Sexton, which installs telephone equipment and security systems in cars, for £10m. As part of the deal Toad shares were placed at 25p.

Presbury, the Nick Lesau property vehicle, is another due to return today. The shares were suspended at 5.75p while the company paid MEPC £103m for a property portfolio.

Aegis, the media buying group, fell 7p to 72.5p after 42.5 per cent of the capital was put up for sale.

Arziva, formerly Cowie, reversed 36.5p to 475p. The market fretted about the finance division which, at the yearly meeting, chairman Sir James McKinnon said would struggle to match last year's performance. He said the bus and motor divisions had traded well in the first quarter.

Old takeover favourite Willis Corroon, the insurance broker, attracted attention, gaining 2.5p to 172.5p.

Rumours of encouraging developments in Angola lifted Petra Diamonds 4p to 139.5p and the accompanying warrants 15p to 111p.

Ionica, the wireless telephone group, continued its modest rally, putting on 14p to 95.5p in response to a 22 per cent company increase.

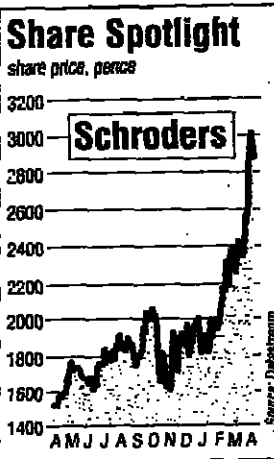
Pace Micro's roller-coaster performance took the shares down 14p to 68p but Dialog Corporation remained firm on the ABN Amro recommendation, gaining a further 11.5p to 187.5p.

TAKING STOCK

PROTEUS International held at 64.5p. The shares of the pharmaceutical group hit 86.5p earlier this year following the development of a BSE test. Kevin Leech, chairman of MIL Laboratories, can exercise an option on 28.5 per cent of the capital at the end of this month. Heavy turnover in Proteus shares in the past few weeks has led some to believe corporate action could occur and Mr Leech may be tempted to sell on his option.

ABACUS Recruitment, which has surged from 16p two years ago to 370p, moves up from AIM to full listing today. The group has cash in the bank and is known to be looking for acquisitions.

HAMLEYS, the toy retailer, slipped to 272.5p. Stockbroker Satherlands is keen on the shares, forecasting profits will be up £1.3m to £9.4m this year and hit £10.2m next.



52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E Code
Alcoholic Beverages							
48	408	380	Adn Dvnt	630.00	+0.00	0.2	63
49	275	260	Budweiser	22.00	+0.00	0.2	108
50	13	12	Barclay	1.00	+0.00	0.2	402
51	10	9	Chirn	10.00	+0.00	0.2	295
52	70	65	Guinness	70.00	+0.00	0.2	103
53	120	110	HighLife	120.00	+0.00	0.2	109
54	27	25	Plumtree	27.00	+0.00	0.2	85a
Banks, Merchant							
55	100	90	Com Brn	100.00	+0.00	0.2	263
56	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
57	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
58	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
59	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
60	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
61	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
62	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
63	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
64	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
65	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
66	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
67	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
68	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
69	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
70	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
71	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
72	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
73	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
74	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
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79	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
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83	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
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88	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
89	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
90	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
91	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
92	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
93	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
94	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
95	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
96	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
97	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
98	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
99	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
100	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263

52 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E Code
Food Producers							
101	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
102	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
103	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
104	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
105	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
106	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
107	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
108	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
109	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
110	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
111	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
112	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
113	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
114	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
115	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
116	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
117	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
118	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
119	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
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121	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
122	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
123	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
124	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
125	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
126	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
127	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
128	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
129	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
130	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
131	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
132	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
133	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
134	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
135	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
136	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
137	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
138	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
139	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
140	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
141	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
142	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
143	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
144	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
145	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
146	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
147	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
148	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
149	250	230	Com Brn	250.00	+0.00	0.2	263
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O'Sullivan keen to prove he has turned new leaf

A SMALL boy was hanging round the entrance to the players' area at the Plymouth Pavilions. For a good hour he stood there, watching wide eyed as snooker names came past, waiting for one person. "Excuse me, mister, is Ronnie in there? I've been waiting ages to get his picture."

Some players would prefer the peace of their peers, avoiding facing what can be an endless demand for photographs and autographs, but Ronnie O'Sullivan went when he was asked. "Not too many of them, is there?" Right.

It was difficult, then, to equate that obliging, kindly image with the tyrant whose temper had a fuse so short it barely rose above the level of the gunpowder. But, the young man so confused by the trappings and expectations of his game that he was ready to burst, has changed.

Or, at least, he says he has. It is frequently dangerous to take what O'Sullivan utters at face value, because his mouth sometimes engages quicker than his brain. There have been occasions when he has openly contemplated retirement, or

Two years after his darkest hour, snooker's reformed bad boy is back in business. Guy Hodgson talked to him.

hittled opponents, things the 23-year-old has regretted. He maintains he is different, however, and his frame endorses that.

Eighteen months ago he was a ballooning 15 stone, now he is three stone lighter and his face could be confused with that of an athlete. He runs, he fishes, he works out in a gym, all soothing activities at odds with a tempestuous past. "I'm giving myself a fresh start."

He needed to. Next week O'Sullivan returns to the Embassy World Snooker Championship, the event where two years ago his descent from a prodigy to a rebel without a pause reached its nadir. Saul might hold the record for the most spectacular conversion but Ronnie's thumping of a press officer at The Crucible, for which he was fined £20,000, comes a close second.

Even his mother, Maria, got fed up with him, returning from

prison for VAT offences to throw him out of the family home. "She knew I'd be back within a week because I couldn't hack it," he said. "I apologised, said there'd be a new me and she told me: 'Never mind saying it, do it'."

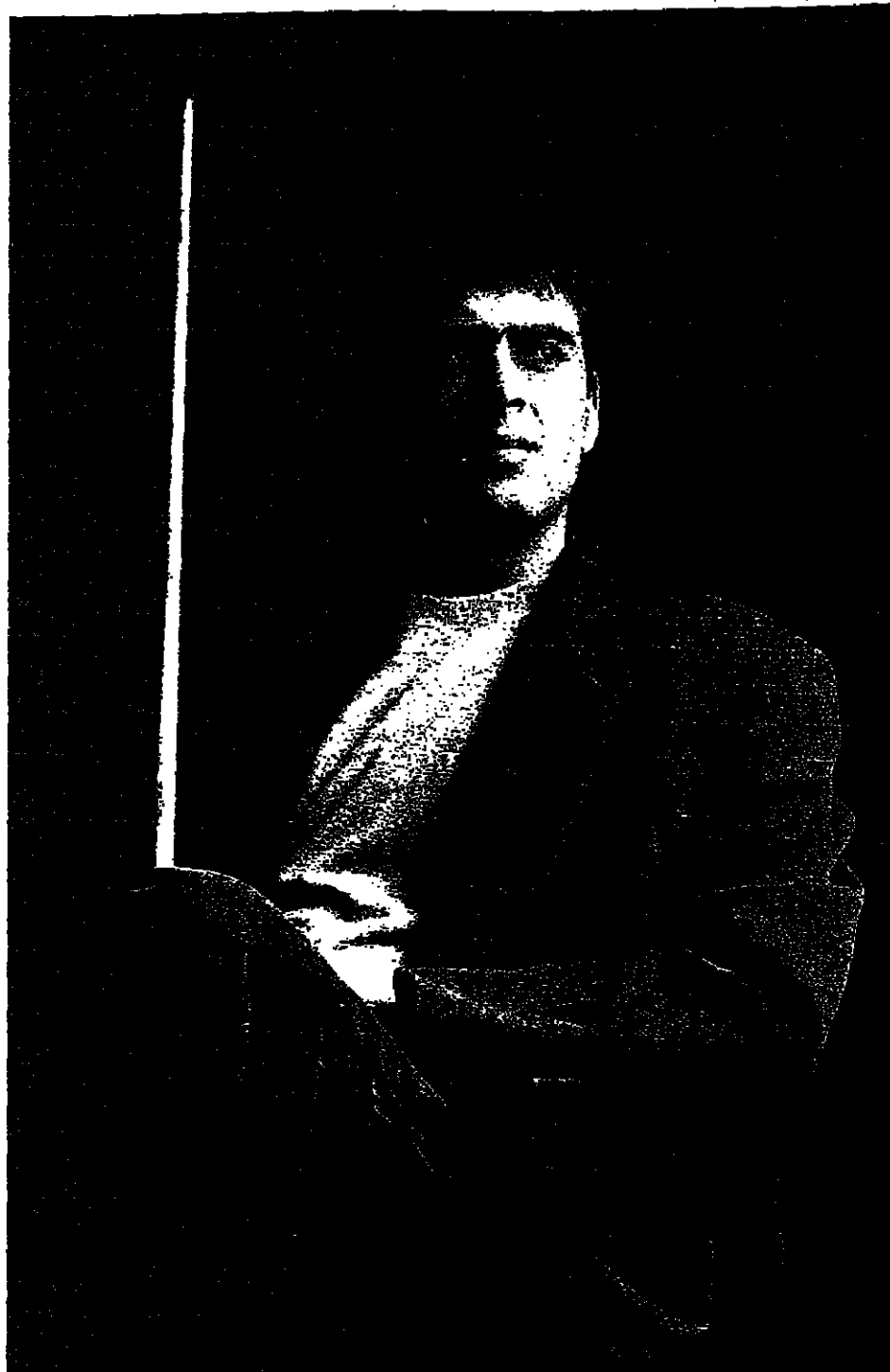
That was when the penny dropped. "I studied myself and didn't like what I saw, the way I looked or anything. I said to myself: 'You've got tons of ability and it's not really worth it throwing it all away. Just give yourself a chance.'"

His road to Damascus was any road or path as long as he could run along it. Eight to nine miles every day, punishing his body for giving it grievous harm in the past. Even in the season he works out regularly, which is some departure for a player who appeared to be following the Jimmy White hedonistic route to success rather than Stephen Hendry's.

"I still enjoy myself," he said. "I go out with my mates now and then and have a good drink and all that but snooker is the important thing right now. I've got to train. I'm 22 and if I'm lucky I've got 10 to 15 years in the game and the only way I'll see it through is if I work at it."

"I'm not like Steve Davis, totally dedicated. I'm easily led. So I have to make up for it by keeping myself in reasonable shape so that when I do pick up the cue I'm half on the boil. If I do have a night out, it's easy to recover from. I'm training to keep myself ticking over."

This mind set is seemingly reinforced by his switching to Ian Doyle, Hendry's manager, from Barry Hearn. Doyle is not noted for welcoming slackers - his tirade against Ken Doherty, which spurred the Irishman to the world title last year, has



O'Sullivan: "I'm giving myself a fresh start"

Photograph: Robert Hallam

become part of championship's folklore - and their collaboration had the words chalk and cheese springing to mind. Appearances were deceptive.

"I've always wanted to join Ian," O'Sullivan said. "When I was 17, and I'd just won the UK championship, deep down I knew where I wanted to be but there was a bit of loyalty to Barry. I signed for another three years but as soon as they were up I decided to leave. It's the best decision I've made."

"Ian doesn't make me work harder, he just gives me words of encouragement at tournaments. He phones me up. 'How do you feel, can I help?' He's

working hard for me. You want to pay him back."

The best way would be to win the world championship that has resided within the Doyle stable since 1992 and which has yet to witness the best of O'Sullivan, whose most notable performance was a semi-final two years ago. He has the talent, not even Hendry would dispute that, but whether he has the application is the question.

Snooker is an easy game mostly for O'Sullivan, who made his first century break at 10 and his first competitive maximum 147 five years later. He is a genius but not always one who has been able to grind

out results when the force is not there. This year he has also been handicapped with a draw that could mean he faces Hendry, John Higgins and Doherty.

"I'm not going to put myself under pressure to win the world championship this time," he said. "I'm just 22, there'll be other opportunities, I'm just excited to be there. For the last few weeks all I've been thinking about is Sheffield. The buzz, the atmosphere."

"Nothing surprises me any more. I just want to keep winning and winning. One tournament is not enough for me."

A world championship would do for now, though.

RFU turns its back on student game

Rugby Union

By Chris Hewett

THOMAS CASTAGNEDE, the audacious architect of a glorious French Grand Slam, believes his country's domination of European rugby to be the direct result of a team spirit forged in the fires of the last two Student World Cups. What is good enough for the Tricolours is not necessarily good enough for England, however; much to the astonishment of some council members, the Rugby Football Union's national playing committee wants to turn its back on the next student tournament in two years' time.

The committee is recommending that England should not field a side in the 2000 competition, a move that threatens to wreck moves by the British Universities Sports Association to host the event. If the BUSA fails to secure the backing of the RFU, the chances of a successful bid are remote indeed.

There is now considerable concern in some sectors of the international rugby community at England's dismissive attitude towards tournaments below senior level; alarmingly, no English side participated in the recent Under-19 World Cup, which was held in France and won in remarkable fashion by the Irish.

Even though the Student World Cup is not an official International Board tournament, there have been three successful events since 1988 and most major Test-playing nations now regard it as a fixture in the calendar.

"A third of the French Grand Slam team were part of the winning 1996 side - indeed, Raphael Ibáñez, the national captain, led that team - and five others played in the 1992 tournament in Italy," said Bob Reeves, an RFU council member and one of the central figures in England's student rugby movement. "I recently spent several hours with Pierre Villepreux, the French coach, who stressed the importance of the student game in pro-

ducing young, intelligent, open-minded players who had not yet been conditioned by the peculiar demands of club rugby."

Kyran Bracken, Will Greenwood and Tony Diprose are all products of student rugby and even in the last World Cup, when the England team was denuded of 20 first choice players, both David Rees and Danny Grewcock emerged, having been virtually unknown beforehand. Yet we have now reached the stage where the national playing committee is questioning the student game's place in the grand order of things. Villepreux, on the other hand, sees it as a significant element in his development programme.

"We are in danger of missing the whole point of the student sector and, if we dismiss it, we will do so at our own peril. Student rugby traditionally encourages speed and risk-taking, while the senior game is still based on no-risk ball-retention. When France beat England in Paris in February, their whole philosophy was based on the freedom of expression common to the student game."

Reeves is pressing the RFU's management board to overturn the national playing committee's recommendation, but the debate has been delayed by the political conflagration surrounding Cliff Brittle's omission from the union's peace talks with the Premiership clubs and Fran Cotton's subsequent resignation as RFU vice-chairman. The internal squabbling took a fresh turn yesterday when Brittle and Cotton were denied the use of Twickenham facilities for a protest meeting with grass-roots club activists planned for this Sunday.

Senior RFU figures also wrote to those clubs planning to attend any forthcoming Brittle-Cotton meeting, underlining that they would do so without the support of the union. The RFU wants its disaffected officers to apply the proverbial sock to the relevant officer until the completion of the current round of peace negotiations.

Protest at Scots' withdrawals

THE Australian Rugby Union yesterday resumed its role as the self-appointed guardian of the world game by lecturing its counterpart in Scotland on the rights and wrongs of team selection for this summer's two Test series against the Wallabies, writes Chris Hewett.

John O'Neill, the managing director of the ARU, gave the Scots a verbal dressing-down over their decision to leave half a dozen first-choice players, including Gary Armstrong, Alan Tait and Doddie Weir, at home to recharge their batteries.

"We will be asking the Scots to confirm that the side they send here is the best available," said O'Neill, clearly suspicious that

English clubs had pulled contractual rank on key personnel. "The prospect of facing such a weakened Scottish team is very disappointing and, if they have so many players unavailable, you have to ask whether it is worth their while coming."

Jim Telfer, the Scottish coach, dismissed O'Neill's veiled allegations, insisting that a number of non-travellers were suffering from injuries while both Armstrong, the captain, and Tait were in need of a rest. "We have a World Cup to think about next year and both Gary and Alan are at an age at which they must tend their physical resources carefully if they want to make it to the tournament," he said.

England's World Cup drill

Hockey

By Bill Colwell

ENGLAND have their first outing this afternoon since their Australian coach, Barry Duncan, announced his squad for the World Cup, when they play Wales in a Four Nations Tournament at the new Southgate Hockey Centre at Trent Park. Scotland play France in the second fixture.

Duncan was yesterday concentrating on penalty corner drills as the team practised at Southgate. He was able to confirm that Jon Wyatt and Jason

Lee had both recovered from injury. Strongly featured in the practice was the specialist corner striker, Calum Giles, who has been recalled for the World Cup.

The coach will be using the weekend and next weekend's trip to Milton Keynes to decide on the second goalkeeping slot behind Simon Mason. David Luckes, a 28-year-old Olympian, and Cannock's 23-year-old Jimi Lewis are vying for the position.

David Bunyan, Wales' new coach, has relied on an experienced squad for his first tournament as he begins his build-up to September's Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur.

On stream for a fast and furious ride



Grant Dalton, skipper of Merit Cup, seeks nature's help on the sprint to Baltimore in the seventh leg of the Whitbread Race

THE warm water current that is the Gulf Stream, although those who live in Britain's north-eastern end of it may have lost some faith in it recently, will be the deciding factor in the seventh leg of the Whitbread race from Fort Lauderdale to Baltimore. It will be a close-fought battle all the way.

It starts off Florida on Sunday and runs north up the eastern seaboard of the United States and is a kind of moving walkway which can give up to three knots of free ride, sometimes even four.

These days there is a lot of information to be gathered from satellites. The spies in the sky can monitor the course of the stream as it meanders north and then

east. They can measure the surface temperature, which is the best indication of where it is running, even though a wind-driven covering of surface water can obscure it and clouds can hamper measurement. They can also measure the hump it makes as there is a slight difference between the height of the moving band of water and the slower track either side of it.

What we don't want is a northerly breeze pushing in the opposite direction, ruffling everything up. A strong northerly can make things really ugly. We would prefer a run, and so far most of the forecasts predict a south-easterly, but we will take what we are given. The leg should take about

the same time as a Fastnet, say three to three and a half days, so the short-course sailing will mean very little sleep for anyone. We are even modifying the food preparation so that nearly everything can be eaten on deck, keeping the weight where we want it, movement to the minimum, optimum boat trim to the maximum.

Fortunately, the boys are well rested after what has been a relatively gentle stopover in Florida. There has been no need to gear up the fitness programme, and they are ready to play it flat out and fast from beginning to end.

No one knows how tricky the last 120 miles up the Chesapeake Bay is going to be. Like

most of the syndicates, we sent our navigator, Mike Quiller, up there for a few days to do some extra research.

If there is a steady reaching breeze, it will be very straightforward. But it is a piece of water with some of its own peculiarities. Not least, the channel can be quite narrow, so trying to overtake people can be difficult. There is some tide, say half to three quarters of a knot, and you have to watch for the currents and eddies caused by the rivers feeding into the bay.

You also have to watch for the crab pots, for which Maryland is so famous; for the electronic warfare games played by the US Navy, which can send all our instruments and satel-

lite positioning systems haywire; for a similar phenomenon caused by a huge steel plant close to Baltimore, and even for the US Seals, their equivalent of the SAS and SBS combined, using unsuspecting yachts as stealth attack targets.

We know a big welcome awaits us in Baltimore, and we may be hosting Prince Albert from our home port of Monaco. We also know there are probably just 40 days sailing left in this Whitbread and we want to be able to look at ourselves in the mirror and say we gave everything we could. We don't just want our second place overall back. Our personal self-respect is as important as the glory.

Standbridge has to stand down in favour of local Powers

By Stuart Alexander
in Fort Lauderdale, Florida

PAUL STANDBRIDGE, the British co-skipper of Toshiba, was yesterday sidelined by Dennis Conner for the seventh leg of the Whitbread Race from here to Baltimore. Conner takes over Toshiba and brings in Annapolis-based Mike Powers, a cargo ship pilot.

Standbridge was gracious

about the move and is due to be back in charge for the eighth leg across the Atlantic. But it is a bitter pill for a man who has not missed a Whitbread start in five consecutive races.

Britain's Lawrie Smith is in Rocky-style fighting mood for the 870-mile sprint, which starts on Sunday. Bloodied, but unbowed by the dismaying he believes cost him a fifth leg win round Cape Horn, he wants to repeat the performance which

put him at the front of the nine-boat fleet coming into Florida. Out against him are at least six other boats capable of scoring a leg win, not least the one which moved up into second place overall, Gunnar Krantz's Swedish Match. Krantz sailed for Smith for part of the last race on Intrum Justitia before moving off the boat to join Chris Dickson's Tokio.

Smith's primary target is not yet Krantz, much less the overall leader Paul Cayard, who took over from Smith when he moved from EF Language to Silk Cut. Saying a good leg could make a top-three finish realistic, Smith added: "At the same time each of the remaining three legs is a race in its own right. It would be nice to consign to the dustbin, where they belong, all those criticisms of a team and a campaign which is up there with the best."

Krantz has also had some setbacks, carrying the baggage of an eighth place on the first leg, being stranded in a calm when leading the fourth, and seeing two boats rob him of valuable points on the fifth.

"We are under pressure as well as putting pressure on others," Krantz said. "We want to keep up the momentum that has seen us move up the leader board, we want to put pressure on ourselves. We have a good

all-round boat and the guys are ready for a big effort."

So are the others. Cayard cannot get enough of winning. Grant Dalton in Merit Cup may at last see some of the lighter running conditions in which he believes he excels. George Collins has rock stars and local knowledge to help him win the race to his home town of Baltimore, and Knut Frostad keeps pulling in more talent on Innovation Kvaerner.

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Photograph: David Jones/PA

Keeping track of which even-
side is doing well, incidentally,
could prove an entertainment
in itself. For example, fixtures
in the AXA League, otherwise
known as the Sunday League,
will also take place on Mondays.
Tuesdays and Wednesdays this
year, some of them under flood-
lights. Benson and Hedges Cup
matches may be played on any
day except Sunday while
Championship fixtures start on
Wednesday, Thursday or Friday.
Is that clear?

Leicestershire

**1997: BACC 11
AXA fourth; B
semi-final; NatW
2nd round.
Captain: J White**

[illegible]

Our with a reputation for
 liberating stockpale and
 ability to make big scores
 Wells, captain James Whit-
 e, Ben Smith and Iain S-
 diffie will again be expected
 to provide the backbone
 the beating and perhaps
 Jonathan Daldin will be al-
 to force his way into the
 team. Leicestershire ap-
 to bat practically all the
 down the order. Mains treble-
 his total of first-class hundreds
 with a couple of centuries
 each end of the season.

Coach Jack Birrell (Shrop-
 shire), Capt. J. J. Simmons (Wid-
 Benfield), Norm-
 to C. Lewis (Surrey).
 Out: G. Parsons (retired), A. John-
 (Somerset), A. Thomas, N. Pier-

Yorkshire

1997: BACC St
AXA 10th; B&H q
ter-final; NatW
quarter final.

Yorkshire were nothing if not consistent. In typical, old-fashioned fashion they were not moving in the Championship. Since they were in 1996 and still there last year. But somehow they were not. The Yorkshire cricket season is back – young Gooch is back. The winter off may turn out to be the best that they could have happened. The prospect of England's first professional international. And if he is in the sort of form in which he began last year then stand by for fireworks. With Chris Silverwood in support and Paul Hutchinson as captain, alongside Richie Richardson, the Yorkshire team. Uncle Tom Cobbley and then the Yorkshire should be a potent attack.

And another Darren Turner to Headingley as well. Darren Turner laid out a plan with the Yorkshire team an instillable appetite for last summer and there is reason to think that the same

Will not apply on his return. What Yorkshire need, though, is for the rest of the batting to get fired up. That is even more pressing now given that M. T. Moxon has retired. It goes without saying that Capt David Byas will be up to mark, but Anthony McGrath needs to concentrate more and realise his ability. Vaughan has to attain consistency. Bradley Parker has to try fifty runs into hundreds.

Director of coaching: M. Moxon.
Overseas player: D. Llewellyn.
Sensationalist: R. Blakey.
In Note:

Capt: M. Moxon (retired); A. W. Jones; J. Harrison (Northants); G. Hayley; A. Morris; M. Kettle; I. P. Deobornog (Wales); S. Blythe

County guide by David Llewellyn

Captain Cork senses fresh start

Jon Culley talks to a new leader whose problems appear to be in the past

AT the height of the turmoil that engulfed Derbyshire cricket last mid-summer, the sight of Dominic Cork's name added to the roll of captains displayed in the County Ground pavilion might have been dismissed as a work of mischief perpetrated by someone with an abhorrent sense of humour.

Already regarded as something of a maverick, Cork had been a central character in the dressing-room revolt that led the former captain Dean Jones to resign in high dudgeon in June. Hardly the ideal figure, it would seem, to restore peace and tranquillity.

Yet as Derbyshire seek to put a troubled episode behind them, the fresh lettering on the polished wood does indeed spell out "D G Cork", his installation as captain one of five new appointments made during a winter of sweeping change.

No one regards it as a joke, especially the 26-year-old Cork himself. "When I was offered the job it took me a second to say 'yes'," he said.

"I've always had an ambition to be captain one day. It's not something I broadcasted, but people here were aware of it."

"I have plenty of ideas and I feel I've gained a lot of knowledge in a relatively short space of time."

You don't play under someone like Kim Barnett without learning a few things.

But what about that volatile behaviour, those near-demonic appeals, the eye-balling of opponents and the all-too-conspicuous disappointment when things have not gone his way?

"Myself, I've never felt there was a lot wrong," he said. "Perhaps I have been guilty of going over the top a bit but I'm a person who wants to win. It is part of my competitive nature. If I appeal strongly it is because I strongly believe the batsman is out."

"But, having said that, I have become a more mature person. I've realised things are not always going to work out exactly as I want them and that aggression has to be channelled in the right directions."

Maturity has been shaped by several factors, from injuries and loss of form to the domestic problems that compelled him to quit England's tour of Zimbabwe the winter before last.

All conspired to create a miserable passage under which he hopes a line has been drawn. The hip and groin problems that wrecked last season - and fuelled his conflict with a sceptical Jones - have been overcome and a winter spent in Derbyshire's commercial office has provided

time for reflection as well as recovery. "I feel comfortable about everything now, on and off the field," he said. "The batteries had been touching empty but they are fully recharged and I'm raring to go. It was frustrating to be watching England on TV rather than being with them but Lord MacLaurin and David Graveney came to see me and were encouraging."

The visit of the English Cricket Board chairman and the chairman of selectors followed Cork's omission from the England line-up, not just for this winter's tour but for the whole of last summer, before which he was told he should work on temperament as well as form. "I think they are pleased I have been made captain here," he said. "I appreciated their visit and I feel very positive about the future. I know that if I do well I will put myself back in contention."

He denies there was ever a possibility of his leaving Derbyshire, as Chris Adams and say "yes", he said.

"I never thought about going. I lost a bit of love for the club last summer but this has always been my county. For me, loyalty is a big part of county cricket and it was Derbyshire who gave me the opportunity to play."

Cork's team is reinforced by the arrival of the Australian batsman Michael Slater but, with Adams gone to Sussex and Malcolm to Northamptonshire, two key members of the side that came second in the Britannic Assurance table, two years ago have been lost. Cork, however, dismisses the notion that Derbyshire will be poorer for their passing. Indeed, a look that almost says "good riddance" betrays itself.

"I don't think losing those players will be that damaging," he said. "What we will have is 11 players who are fully committed and together, there will not be any individuals."

Team spirit, he says, will come from close bonding. "There will be no first and second teams, just a squad. I want everyone, from the youngest to the most senior players, to see himself as a player-coach, able to take advice and give it. And they will find me an open captain."

Throughout Cork's conversation, one phrase recurs: fresh start, new beginning. With a new chairman (Vic Brownett), director of cricket (Andy Hayhurst), secretary (John Smedley) and commercial manager (Keith Stevenson) in addition to a new captain, Derbyshire could adopt it as a party slogan. From Cork's lips, it sounds more like a personal mantra.

Lara touches down to lead weakened Warwickshire

BRIAN LARA made a dash from Heathrow Airport yesterday morning to join an injury-hit Warwickshire for their County Championship opener against Durham which starts at Edgbaston today.

The opening batsman Andy Moles is ruled out with an Achilles tendon injury, and the former captain, Tim Munton, is likely to delay his return after last year's back surgery.

The England spinner Ashley Giles had an injection in his left heel last week, and fitness checks are scheduled for the wicketkeeper Keith Piper (neck) and seamer Graeme Welch (broken finger).

Neil Smith or Dominic Oosterloo could open with England's Nick Knight, and the former Sussex batsman Ed Gidkins will make his debut after serving a 19-month ban for a drugs offence. Mike Atherton will open

the batting for Lancashire against Sussex in Hove, despite being offered a rest after the West Indies tour for less than two weeks, wants to make an immediate bid to retain his England place after stepping down as captain.

Sussex will be without their new overseas player, Michael Bevan, as the 27-year-old Australian all-rounder is involved in the one-day international series against India. Wasim Khan, recruited from Warwickshire, opens the Sussex batting with Toby Pearce. The new captain, Chris Adams, comes in at three.

Glamorgan are set to give Simon Jones the chance to follow in the footsteps of his father, the former England bowler Jeff Jones, by naming the 19-year-old in their 13-man squad against Gloucestershire at Bristol.



Tim Henman plays a backhand during his win in Tokyo yesterday. Photograph: AFP

Henman has sweet revenge

Tennis

TIM HENMAN gained revenge over Jerome Golmard yesterday to enhance his hopes of winning the Japan Open in Tokyo.

The British No 2 suffered a first-round exit at the hands of the Frenchman in the Australian Open in January, but he needed just one hour to set the record straight, with a 6-4, 6-1 win at the Ariake Coliseum.

Henman, recalling his Australian Open defeat, said: "It was a very disappointing result. I didn't have a game plan and I let him dictate too much. But today was a different story. I didn't give him too many opportunities to get into long rallies or start to move me round."

Both players had no break chance until the score went to 4-5, 30-40 on Golmard's serve, which Henman converted to take the set.

A spirited Henman chalked up a 5-0 lead in the second set, saving the only break point against him throughout the

match at 30-40 in the third game.

Henman, who at No 15 is the highest-ranked player left in the field, now meets the American Jan-Michael Gambill, who beat Rainer Schuttler of Germany, in today's quarter-finals.

The top seed, Patrick Rafter, was knocked out on Wednesday, and Michael Chang became the latest big-name casualty yesterday when he went down 2-6, 7-5, 4-6 to the 113th-ranked German, Hendrik Dreckmann.

Wigan still sure about Sailor

Rugby League

By Dave Hadfield

WIGAN have reassured themselves that Wendell Sailor still wants to join them next season.

The Australian Test winger cast doubts on his contract to join the club on a two-year deal worth £500,000 when he said at the weekend that he would rather stay with the Brisbane Broncos.

"I have spoken to my manager, Chris White, and he has assured me nothing has changed and that Wendell still wants to join us next season," Wigan's chief executive, Phil Clarke, said.

"I think it was just a very tough question that was thrown at him after he had played particularly well for the Broncos. It was answered in the euphoria of the moment, and there is also Test selection coming up for

the match against New Zealand and he didn't want to sound as though he was writing off Australia. I am just as confident as I was before that he will be with us next year."

Wigan's match against St Helens in Swansea on 26 July will be one of the highlights of Super League's programme of games on the road around the British Isles this summer, which was officially announced yesterday.

Apart from that match at the Vetch Field, which has already successfully hosted Welsh international matches, there will be games in Cardiff, Edinburgh and Northampton, as well as two in the notably active development area of Gateshead.

Andy Gregory, the coach of the Salford side which will play Leeds in Gateshead in the first match of the series on 6 July, said: "These will not be exhibition

matches. Everyone will be after the two points on offer as they try to make the top five for the play-offs at the end of the season."

All the proceeds from the six matches are to be pooled so that the benefit from the experiment will be shared out equally among Super League clubs.

The Bradford Bulls forward Sonny Nickle is clear to play in his side's Super League match at Sheffield Eagles tonight after being found not guilty of punching.

Nickle appeared before yesterday's Rugby Football League disciplinary committee after being sent off for allegedly punching centre Richie Blackmore in Sunday's home defeat by Leeds. Blackmore, who was sent to the sin-bin for his part in the incident, also escaped punishment after the RFL executive committee watched a video of the match.

Sporting Digest

Baseball

AMERICAN LEAGUE: NY Yankees 8 Anaheim 2; Baltimore 4 Chicago White Sox 2; Boston 10 Seattle 1; Cleveland 3 Kansas City 7; Toronto 3 Texas 2.

NATIONAL LEAGUE: Cincinnati 4 Houston 1; Florida 3 Philadelphia 2; Montreal 4 Milwaukee 2; Atlanta 7 Pittsburgh 2; NY Mets 2 Chicago Cubs 1; San Diego 1 San Francisco 0; Philadelphia 10 Los Angeles 0; Colorado 2 Los Angeles 0.

Basketball

NBA: Milwaukee 91 Boston 90; Washington 91 Cleveland 88; Charlotte 90 New Jersey 82; Orlando 88 Miami 87; Detroit 91 Chicago 78; Indiana 88 Atlanta 76; Phoenix 84 Denver 82; Golden State 82 LA Clippers 80.

Bowls

PBA INTERNATIONAL OPEN (Buckingham Palace): England 1, Scotland 1, Wales 1, Northern Ireland 1, Republic of Ireland 1, Jersey 1, Gibraltar 1, Channel Islands 1, Overseas 1. (Preliminary rounds: England 7-5 3-7 7-4; Republic of Ireland 7-5 3-7 7-4; Jersey 7-5 3-7 7-4; Gibraltar 7-5 3-7 7-4; Channel Islands 7-5 3-7 7-4; Overseas 7-5 3-7 7-4.)

Cricket

First-class matches: Northamptonshire 122 for 3 v Canterbury University. Match drawn.

THE PARKS: Sussex 102 for 4 (N R) v York; Lancashire 102 for 4 (N R) v Oxford University. Match drawn.

Starting today: BRITANNIC ASSURANCE COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP. First day of four, 11.0.

BRISTOL: Gloucestershire v Glamorgan; GANTERBURY: Kent v Middlesex.

THE OVAL: Surrey v Northamptonshire; EDGBASTON: Warwickshire v Durham; WIMBORNE: Dorsetshire v Essex.

HEADINGLEY: Yorkshire v Somerset; DERBY (includes Sunday play): Derbyshire v Nottinghamshire.

HOVE (includes Sunday play): Sussex v Lancashire.

OTHER FIRST-CLASS MATCHES: First day of five, 11.00.

THE PARKS: Oxford University v Hampshire; FENNER'S (includes Sunday play): Cambridge University v Leicestershire.

Cricket

Dermit Reeve, the Somerset coach, is set to play his first game in nearly two years when Somerset take on Yorkshire in the AXA League at Headingley on Sunday.

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Players' union fears for clubs

Football

By Andrew Harkin

PREMIERSHIP clubs may go out of business if football's spiralling wage bills continue to soar unchecked, Gordon Taylor, the Professional Footballers' Association chief executive, warned yesterday.

Taylor expressed his fears following Wednesday's revelations, by the accountants Deloitte and Touche, of a 35 per cent hike in salaries among those playing in the elite division in the past season alone, while Premiership clubs continue to struggle to break even.

Only two Premiership clubs, Manchester United and Liverpool, have managed to make significant profits in the past season, and Blackburn, Coventry and the relegated Nottingham Forest actually lost money - in direct contrast to the salaries being earned by their employees. The basic salary of an average Premiership player is now between £150,000 and £200,000.

Taylor said: "You wonder how long it can go on. What comes up must come down, so I do not see how it can go on."

"The number of clubs in existence and doing well would be a worry. We are very much in favour of getting a wide base and variety in our game, but at the moment most of the money seems to be going to the very apex of the pyramid."

Operating profits of more than £10m were made at Old Trafford and Anfield in the 1996-97 season, before transfer spending, but overall the 20 clubs in the Premiership made a pre-tax loss of £9.4m on a combined turnover of £455.4m.

Manchester United yesterday defended their wage bill after figures revealed it rose by 70 per cent last season. United's chief executive, Martin Edwards, stressed it should not be viewed in isolation. "Wages are only a percentage of our overall turnover and our bottom line is very healthy," he said.

Taylor, meanwhile, is not the only person to fear for the future of clubs other than the likes of United. The financial consultant Stefan Szymanski said that many of the other clubs are going wrong by failing to secure value for money on the transfer market.

"The secret is to be the exception against the other clubs, and the two exceptions that

stand out are Manchester United and Wimbledon in that they have managed to put together a team whose performance has been better than what it should have been worth in the market."

However, Brendon Batson, also of the PFA, insisted players' wages are justified. "The huge television deals, amounting to £740m over four years, are due to the popularity of the game - and that is down to the players," he argued.

His views were at odds with football's first big wage earner, George Best. The former Manchester United winger said: "There is too much money in the game and we have seen it go out of control. You have all these youngsters being paid huge amounts of money, before they have really earned it."

The former Preston and England player, Sir Tom Finney, refused to condemn players for taking as much money as they could from the game. "I've always said that an employer pays you what he thinks you're worth. Who can blame players if they are offered £15,000 or £20,000 per week?" said Sir Tom, who earned £20 a week on his retirement in 1960, the year the maximum wage was scrapped.

Stam moves step closer to United deal

JAAP STAM took another step closer to joining Manchester United yesterday following a meeting between his agent and club, PSV Eindhoven.

PSV are prepared to sell the Dutch international defender below their £15m asking price if Stam waives his 15 per cent cut of the transfer fee and United increase their offer.

The Manchester City manager, Joe Royle, has dismissed claims that Georgi Kinkladze is about to sign for Ajax, but he did hint at a future move involving the Georgian midfielder.

"We have been talking to Ajax for some time. The dialogue goes on and the situation could obviously change very quickly," Royle said.

The Football League chairman, David Sheepshanks, has calmed fears of a breakaway involving First Division clubs, insisting: "There will be no split."

There had been concerns that they would split from Second and Third Division clubs to try to boost their income from television and sponsorship.

But after a meeting in London yesterday, Sheepshanks said: "I believe that it is now highly unlikely that we will see a breakaway in the Football League. As far as I am aware it was never really something the Division One teams wanted to do and I now think we're on the verge of success in our negotiations."

Halifax prepare to start the party

Non-League notebook

By Rupert Mercall

THE long wait is almost over for Halifax Town. Victory for the runaway GM Vauxhall Conference leaders at Kidderminster Harriers tomorrow will seal the title and ensure that the West Yorkshire side replace Doncaster Rovers in the Nationwide Football League next season.

Lincoln City, Darlington and Colchester United all made it back in to the League within a year or two being relegated, but Halifax have been in the Conference for five seasons. Their transformation from strugglers to a side 14 points clear at the top has been remarkable - last year they were in danger of relegation to the UniBond League until the last day of the season.

Halifax set up tomorrow's possible party with a thrilling 4-3 win over Southport at The Shay on Easter Monday. Despite being down to 10 men following the dismissal of their player-coach, Kieran O'Regan, they came from behind with two goals in the last eight minutes from Dave Hanson.

That game against Southport was watched by a crowd of 4,701, the highest Conference attendance of the season and the best at The Shay since 7,451 watched their last game in the League, against Hereford United in May 1993. Whether

or not promotion has already been secured, an even bigger turn-out can be expected at their next home game against Cheltenham Town, one of their two remaining rivals for the title, tomorrow week.

The biggest game outside the Conference tomorrow takes place at Gander Green Lane, where Sutton United, second in the Ryman League Premier Division, take on Kingsthorpe, who are four points clear with a game in hand. Victory for the visitors will mean that Geoff Chapple's side will have only one realistic rival for the title: third-placed Boreham Wood, who are 10 points adrift with three games in hand.

The top two in the UniBond League meet on Tuesday at Holker Street, where Barrow's encounter with Boston United, who are four points behind the Cumbrians having played a game more, has been declared an all-ticket match.

Merrith Tydfil replaced Forest Green Rovers at the top of the Dr Martens League with a 4-0 home win over the Gloucestershire side on Monday.

Mel Pejic, the former Stoke and England full-back, is the new manager of the Conference strugglers Leek Town, in succession to Peter Ward. Ray Walker, the former Port Vale captain who had been in caretaker charge, becomes player-coach at Harrison Park.

Lynn has hole in one at the Cannes Open

Golf

DAVID LYNN, a 24-year-old from Trehenham, yesterday holed in one for the first time in his career, shot 67 for his best round of the year - and was joint leader after the first round of the Cannes Open.

A delighted Lynn said the recent success of Lee Westwood, once an amateur playing partner, had helped motivate him. Sharing the lead with the Frenchman Jeff Remsey, the Australian Robert Allenby and Jeev Singh, from India, Lynn said: "Lee's success is good to see. I used to play youth golf in the same year as Lee and beat him one year in the English Amateur Championship quarter-finals. I remember every detail. I was about six under and only beat him on the last green."

Yesterday, Lynn, started badly with a bogey six at the third but birdied the fourth, then holed in one at the 155-yard fifth. "I was really pleased to get my first ever hole in one because my younger brother Simon, also a professional, has had five already," Lynn could have had two further aces as his ball finished six inches from the hole at the short eighth for another birdie, and a third birdie at the 12th earned him his 67.

TODAY'S NUMBER

2,000,000

The number of youngsters now playing Kwik Cricket, the junior version of the game, according to an English Cricket Board survey. The game's upsurge in popularity has been credited to the introduction of the game into primary schools and clubs as part of the ECB's cricket development policy.

Golf

CANNES OPEN (Royal Mougins GC) Leading: David Lynn (67) to a 2-1 lead over Robert Allenby (68) and Jeev Singh (69). (Round 1: Lynn 67, Allenby 68, Singh 69, Remsey 70, Pejic 71, Hanson 72, Pejic 73, Hanson 74, Pejic 75, Hanson 76, Pejic 77, Hanson 78, Pejic 79, Hanson 80, Pejic 81, Hanson 82, Pejic 83, Hanson 84, Pejic 85, Hanson 86, Pejic 87, Hanson 88, Pejic 89, Hanson 90, Pejic 91, Hanson 92, Pejic 93, Hanson 94, Pejic 95, Hanson 96, Pejic 97, Hanson 98, Pejic 99, Hanson 100.)

JAPANESE OPEN (Tokyo) Leading: Lee Westwood (65) to a 2-1 lead over Robert Allenby (68) and Jeev Singh (69). (Round 1: Westwood 65, Allenby 68, Singh 69, Remsey 70, Pejic 71, Hanson 72, Pejic 73, Hanson 74, Pejic 75, Hanson 76, Pejic 77, Hanson 78, Pejic 79, Hanson 80, Pejic 81, Hanson 82, Pejic 83, Hanson 84, Pejic 85, Hanson 86, Pejic 87, Hanson 88, Pejic 89, Hanson 90, Pejic 91, Hanson 92, Pejic 93, Hanson 94, Pejic 95, Hanson 96, Pejic 97, Hanson 98, Pejic 99, Hanson 100.)

EDDLEMAN USTA CHALLENGER (Birmingham) Leading: Lee Westwood (65) to a 2-1 lead over Robert Allenby (68) and Jeev Singh (69). (Round 1: Westwood 65, Allenby 68, Singh 69, Remsey 70, Pejic 71, Hanson 72, Pejic 73, Hanson 74, Pejic 75, Hanson 76, Pejic 77, Hanson 78, Pejic 79, Hanson 80, Pejic 81, Hanson 82, Pejic 83, Hanson 84, Pejic 85, Hanson 86, Pejic 87, Hanson 88, Pejic 89, Hanson 90, Pejic 91, Hanson 92, Pejic 93, Hanson 94, Pejic 95, Hanson 96, Pejic 97, Hanson 98, Pejic 99, Hanson 100.)

WTA TOURNAMENT (Birmingham) Leading: Lee Westwood (65) to a 2-1 lead over Robert Allenby (68) and Jeev Singh (69). (Round 1: Westwood 65, Allenby 68, Singh 69, Remsey 70, Pejic 71, Hanson 72, Pejic 73, Hanson 74, Pejic 75, Hanson 76, Pejic 77, Hanson 78, Pejic 79, Hanson 80, Pejic 81, Hanson 82, Pejic 83, Hanson 84, Pejic 85, Hanson 86, Pejic 87, Hanson 88, Pejic 89, Hanson 90, Pejic 91, Hanson 92, Pejic 93, Hanson 94, Pejic 95, Hanson 96, Pejic 97, Hanson 98, Pejic 99, Hanson 100.)

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Ginola feels World Cup frustration

Football

DAVID GINOLA believes Tottenham's relegation battle has ruined his chances of playing in this summer's World Cup finals.

The former Newcastle midfielder has been in excellent form since his move to White Hart Lane at the start of the season and the Spurs manager, Christian Gross, even telephoned France's coach, Aimé Jacquet, to sing the praises of the winger, who is the club's leading scorer. However, Ginola was yesterday left out of Jacquet's latest squad for a friendly match against Sweden in Stockholm on 22 April.

With time running out before the finals start in June in his home country, Ginola fears Spurs' plight has given Jacquet the wrong impression about his form.

"It's difficult for the manager because he knows Spurs are in a relegation position," Ginola said. "If we were in the top five he would be more interested by me but at the moment we are in a relegation position, and he thinks I am struggling like the team."

"If you don't come to look at games and just see the results, they lost, lost or drew, and there is nothing on TV about how I was fantastic, you must think I am not playing well."

Ginola was blamed by many critics after his mistake in the final qualifying game for USA 94 contributed to France missing out on what looked a certain place in the finals. But the

31-year-old believes it is time that he was given another chance and still holds out a faint hope that Jacquet may give him the opportunity to redeem himself.

"There is always a chance, and I hope I will be in the next game. We have four games to go with Tottenham, and if we can get some good results I think he has to call me just to try. It's not an important game, just friendlies. Maybe he will think: 'It will be good to try David because he can help us in different ways. Just by being in the squad of 22 with his personality he can help us'. What he has to see is that I'm not coming into the squad to destroy everything."

The Premiership will be represented in Jacquet's squad by Arsenal's Patrick Vieira and Nicolas Anelka, who have been rewarded for their exceptional form in the Gunners' charge towards a League and Cup double. Jacquet has also recalled Bernard Lama, the West Ham goalkeeper, but he has overlooked the Chelsea defender Frank Leboeuf for the friendly.

Lama, who also missed a year of international duty after a ban for smoking cannabis, is set to start the match after being named as one of only two goalkeepers.

Chris Armstrong, Ginola's Tottenham team-mate, insisted today that any rift between him and the Spurs coach, Christian Gross, had been healed. The Spurs striker clashed with his manager after being substituted against Coventry on Monday,

and Darren Anderton and David Howells have also made public their unhappiness with things at White Hart Lane.

Spurs travel to Barnsley on Saturday for a game that is vital for both team in the fight for survival, and Armstrong dismissed suggestions of a mutiny in the camp.

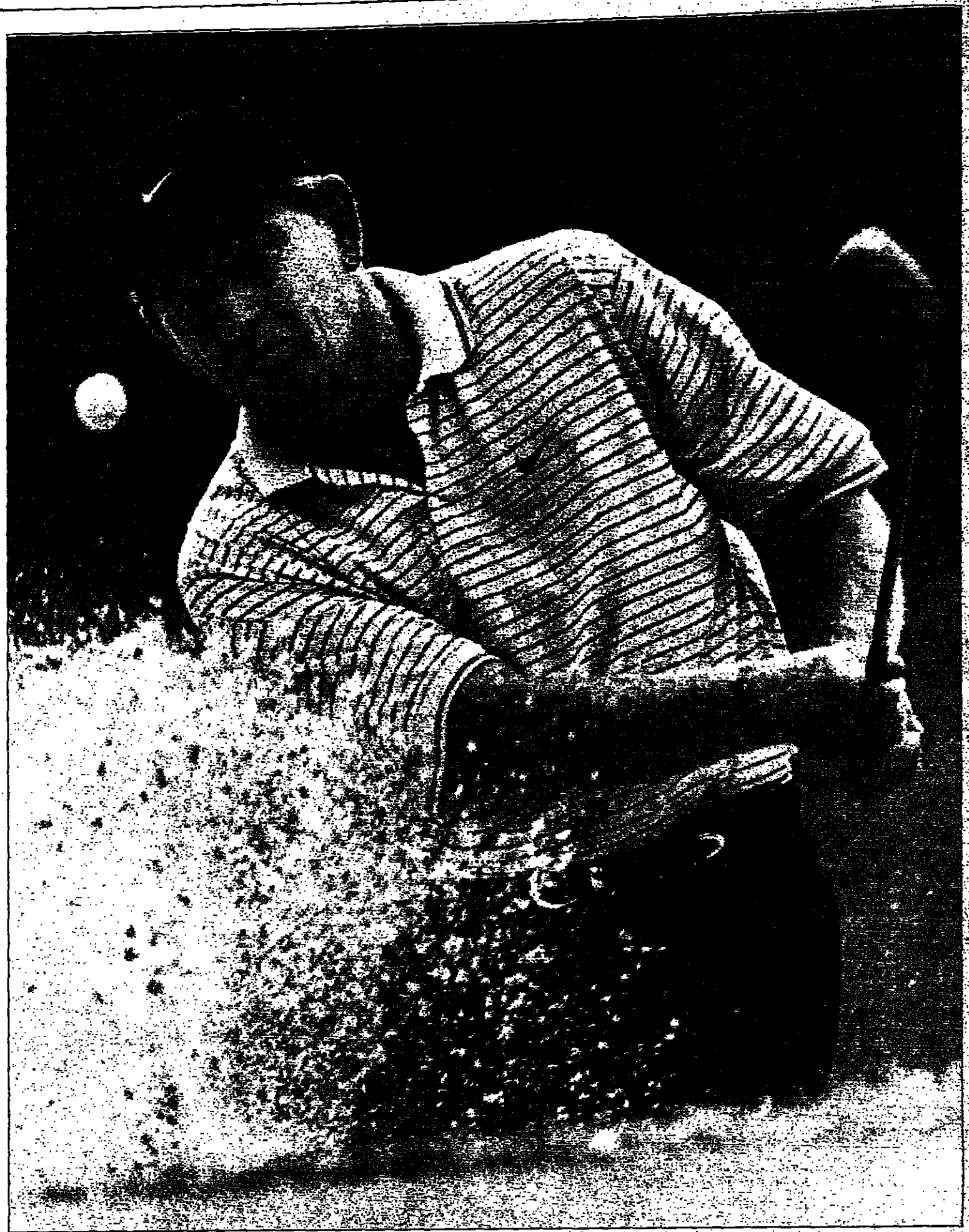
"There is no problem with the players and the manager," he said. "I was disappointed about getting substituted in the last couple of games - I think any player is going to be disappointed about being brought off. There is no problem now, it is all about sticking together. As long as Tottenham are in the Premier League that is all that matters."

"There are a lot of fit players in the squad now and that is always going to cause problems. Everyone is getting back fit so there is always going to be someone unhappy, but it is good for the club and that is the most important thing."

Gross refused to disclose whether he had fined Armstrong for his outburst, but he said he could see why the player was upset.

"I understand if players are not happy or satisfied when I take them off," Gross said. "I wasn't satisfied with Chris Armstrong's performance against Coventry and that is why I took him off."

"He is very ambitious and I like to have ambitious players who want to play. But I have sat down and spoken with Chris and he must understand that all the players here must follow the rules."



Zimbabwe's Nick Price, the defending champion, hits out of a bunker to the 12th green during yesterday's first round of the MCI Classic in Hilton Head, South Carolina. Photograph: John Kuntz/Reuters

Ferguson finds himself new Star

FROM Alex Ferguson's point of view, racehorses have several advantages over professional footballers. They do not employ agents, they do not go clubbing the night before a big race, and they do not date Spice Girls.

Best of all, when your horse goes to the races, the serious pressure is someone else's problem.

Such were the pleasures for the Manchester United manager yesterday as he visited Newmarket to watch Queensland Star, the first horse to carry his suitably red colours, contest the Stuntney Maiden Stakes. If he had hoped for a little anonymity, however, he was in the wrong place.

At 10.45 on a damp Newmarket morning, the winning post at the bottom of the Rowley Mile was swarming with reporters and cameras as Ferguson posed with Queensland Star and Candle Riggs, another two-year-old, for the benefit of the bookmaker who will sponsor his racing silks. Both horses were named with

The Manchester United manager found anonymity impossible at Newmarket racecourse yesterday. Greg Wood reports

commendable sentiment. Queensland Star was a ship which Ferguson's father helped to build at the Govan shipyards 40 years ago, while Candle Riggs is a street in his native Glasgow.

"Everyone gets to a point in life where you have to have other interests and you think about restructuring your life in terms of what you are going to do when you retire," Ferguson said. "If you want to stay in football you have to find a way of surviving the pressure, and the last couple of years have rekindled an interest in racing which I had when I was a player. I enjoy the fresh air, it's good therapy for me."

Better still for the manager's

mood was the race itself, a video of which may well feature in Ferguson's team talks in the weeks ahead. Queensland Star was swiftly into the lead, but seemed to weaken as Bodfari Muka closed to within a length with the winning post in sight. A late burst of speed, though, restored a healthy lead, and Queensland Star had almost two lengths to spare at the line.

John McCrick, a Newcastle fan, put it to the filly's owner afterwards that this might be the only prize Ferguson will win this spring. For all the obvious delight on the Scotsman's face, however, he was sensible enough to do so from a safe distance.

"You can't compare this to

winning a football match," Ferguson said. "One is my job and this is my hobby, but it was very exciting. If my team shows as much determination, then we'll get there."

Racing is eager to attract new owners at the best of times, and those with a public profile as high as Ferguson's are doubly welcome. He was surrounded by autograph hunters of all ages from the moment he appeared in the paddock, and it was not merely Manchester United fans who were delighted to see his horse come home in front. It is as well that any new owner experiences the delights of the turf before coming face-to-face with its frustrations.

For, as Ferguson will soon discover, thoroughbreds are so quirky that even football teams seem predictable by comparison. Trainers, meanwhile, will offer endless excuses as to why it is that his horse keeps eating the



Alex Ferguson at Newmarket yesterday, when he was a winner. Photograph: Peter Jay

finest oats but fails to appear at the track (rather like a certain football manager, in fact, when the England squad is announced). And if Queensland Star is ever unlucky enough to feature in a stewards' inquiry, the racecourse officials may not be as accommodating as the Old Trafford referees who award a penalty whenever David Beckham bends down to tie his boot lace in the opposition half.

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THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD
No. 3587, Friday 17 April By Phil
Thursday's solution

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
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ACROSS

- Stop orbiting body getting round with the others (4,2,4)
- One acting disturbed at reading (9)
- Attitude taken by lecturer in study? (4)
- Suggest concert should have point (6)
- Modern college affected by drugs? (4,4)
- Stalwart to try and try again? Not right (6)
- Grounded in accident? Little was expected of him (8)
- Uncommon fellow, an artist, one brought in to enliven, mostly (4,4)
- Protection afforded by a yard in insubstantial area (6)
- Where academics may dispute better collection of data (3,5)
- Information about boy brought back from Scandinavian country (6)
- Victim of pellet or bullet (4)
- TV detective caught with poem in cryptic writing? (5,4)
- Put fish in a depth of water with the minimum of effort - and it will do this! (4,2,4)
- Caesar involved with plot to do away with second Egyptian ruler (9)
- Machine-gunner's first intent - to cripple (4)
- More than one stress is lifted when indulging in joints (8)
- Chap seen in river (sacred river) (5)
- Wage? Outlay involves it, on reflection (7)
- Be decisive and put in a damp-course (4,3,3)
- Oriental building is past housing an idol (6)
- Purely interested in mountaineering? (4,6)
- The Spanish stitch here? Not here! (9)
- I'm a dolt sent abroad, without power? (8)
- Most of red beans may make you sick (7)
- What one calls judge down in Shropshire town (6)
- A new set provided by theatrical backer (5)
- Book on South American city shows verve (4)

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